EASTER SERMONS

By EDWARD KING, D.D.

Late Lord Bishop of Lincoln.

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By the Late Right Rev. EDWARD KING, D.D.,
Bishop of Lincoln

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PREACHED IN

LINCOLN CATHEDRAL

BY

EDWARD KING, D.D.

Late Bishop of Lincoln

EDITED BY

B. W. RANDOLPH, D.D.

Canon of Ely

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PREFACE

It was Bishop King's practice to preach on Easter Sunday evening at the popular evensong in the nave of his cathedral.

The sermons in this little volume were all preached on one or other of these occasions, between the years 1890-1910.

B. W. R.

Ely,
December 30th, 1913.

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EASTER SERMONS

Sermon I

THE RISEN CHRIST—THE SOURCE OF NEW LIFE

"*Because I live, ye shall live also.*"

S. John xiv. 19.

The greatness of our Easter Festival when we commemorate again the Resurrection of Christ is not so much to be seen in the wonderful events which immediately attended it, as in the wonderful abiding results which followed after it, and from it.

The events of the first Resurrection morning are indeed wonderful and full of Divine teaching, and not merely thrilling displays of supernatural power. The great earthquake was a fitting tribute to His power by Whom all things were made; the stone rolled away already was the unexpected result of persevering faith; the appearance of the angel was a witness from heaven of the truth of that which we believe. "He is not here: He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." The paralysing of the Roman guard, when "the keepers did shake and become as dead men"; the failure of

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the powers of this world to frustrate the plans of God; the loosening of the pains of death was the triumph over our last enemy, because it was not possible that He should be held by him.

These are some of the supernatural events which took place on this first Easter morning when the Lord arose and came forth from His tomb. And they are full of spiritual significance and ineffable importance; but the true greatness of to-day's festival, the supreme importance of the Resurrection, what was really continued in our Lord's work, is made known to us rather through the events which followed it and which flow from it as a river of living water from its source.

The reality and the greatness of Easter joy is to be found for us in the reality of the relation of the Resurrection of Christ to our own lives. This is S. Paul's way of regarding it, "For in that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." This is the way in which the Lord Himself speaks of it, "Because I live ye shall live also." "Fear not," He said; "I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

First, then, we ought to keep more constantly before our minds the thought, "He is risen," "He ever liveth," then, where is He? If we believe in

His Resurrection not merely as a momentary triumph over the power of death, but as implying that He is alive for evermore, "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him," that it is the same Easter greeting which has ever been made—"Christ has risen!"—then the question arises naturally: Where is He? "He is not here," the angel said, pointing to the empty tomb, "He is not here: He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."

He is not where once He was, in the manger or the stable in Bethlehem; He is not where once He was, toiling in the village shop at Nazareth; He is not where once He was, going about on this earth visibly doing good; He is not where once He was, hanging on the Cross for us; He is not where once He was, in the tomb in the Garden. Then where is He? He has gone back to the Father from Whom He came, He has ascended through the heavens, and is set down on His Father's Throne, robed with the robe of His own peculiar glory, in the love and the glory which He used to have with the Father before the world was. He is at the right hand of the Father, the place of honour, and glory, and power.

Thus much certainly we should try to keep constantly before our minds as following from our belief in the risen Christ; and if this thought leads us eventually to desire to know something further and to ask, "Has Christ's life in heaven now anything to do with our lives down here on earth?" we can answer with

certainty, guiding ourselves by the sure word of God: "He is gone into the heavens now to appear in the presence of God for us." He is gone into the very heavens now to appear openly before the Face of God on our behalf.

He is there as the Priest upon His Throne. He is there praying for us. "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." Observe how we are taught to think of this as going on now. He is gone NOW to appear on our behalf: He *ever* liveth to make intercession for us. As often as Christ's help is needed He is there ready to give it: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous." We who, through God's mercy, declare to-day that we believe in the risen Saviour, should endeavour to keep these revealed results of His Resurrection constantly before our minds.

We may add one word more in answer to the natural desire to know what the living Christ is doing for us.

He is in heaven, and He is there preparing a place for us: "I go," He said, "to prepare a place for you." And He has told us where that place shall be, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My Throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His Throne."

In this place of rest and glory we are to sit upon the Throne; in this place of love we are to be with Him. He is getting ready for us, according to the words of His own prayer, "Father, I will that they also,

Whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world."

This, then, is our first duty, as believers in the Resurrection, to keep constantly before our minds the thought of the *Living* Christ—"He is risen!" "He is alive for evermore!"

This thought, we have said, leads us naturally to the further inquiry, What is He doing? What has He done, in His risen life? We have given a part of the answer, but only a part; we have spoken of His Ascension, and intercession, of the place which He is preparing for us: this is at least a part of the answer of what He is doing for us in heaven. If we are asked again, What has the Saviour done? What is He doing for us on earth? we may reply He has founded His Church. It is His Body, He is the Living Head.

It was about this that He was talking to His disciples during the mysterious forty days that He remained on earth between His Resurrection and Ascension; "He was speaking to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."

This is one of the greatest questions of the day, "What does the Bible say of the Church?"

When we think of Christ we must be careful not to think of Him merely as perfect Man, the pattern of moral perfection—He is that indeed, but He is far, far more—we must think of Him as He is revealed to us in the Scriptures. We must consider His person,

His offices, His teaching, His life and work, His kingdom: the kingdom of Christ is the fulfilment of prophecy; the ruling idea of the Old Testament is the establishment of God's kingdom in the world. The Divine purpose for Israel was that they should be Jehovah's people and that He should be their God, in the fullest sense of the words. But this was but a fragment of the whole counsel of God; it was but the means to the establishment of His universal kingdom throughout the world.

When Christ came He proclaimed the fulfilment of all, and more than all for which the prophets had looked with yearning eyes, founding a spiritual kingdom, which knows no limits of race, or country, or class, or space, or time; uniting all men in an equal fellowship of blessing and privilege and hope.

This kingdom Christ spoke about during the great forty days after His Resurrection, before He ascended up on high; this kingdom He founded when He said to His disciples, "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you"; when He breathed on them, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained"; when He gave them the great commission with the words, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am

with you alway, even unto the end of the world." To establish this kingdom He gave the invisible power of the Holy Spirit after His Ascension. This was the great end to which the Resurrection of Jesus led in the mind of the Apostle when he declared on the day of Pentecost, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."

S. Paul, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, has given us evidence for the Resurrection of Christ regarded as a simple fact, that He was seen of Cephas, then of the Twelve, after that of about five hundred brethren at once, then of James, last of all of the Apostle himself. And all this was as it had been foretold by God, for He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. And yet we find, some five years after, the great Apostle, in his Epistle to the Philippians, still praying that he might know Christ "and the power of His Resurrection." It was not enough for the great Apostle to accept the mere fact; it was the results of the fact, the full power of the Resurrection which the Apostle was still striving to know—"To know Him and the power of His Resurrection." So, brethren, it should be with us, we should not be satisfied with a mere intellectual assent to the evidences which convince our minds of the fact of the Resurrection, but year by year, as the great Festival comes round, we should ask ourselves if we

are growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the power of His Resurrection, and of the results which follow from it.

I have mentioned two lines of thought for your consideration, as results of the Resurrection:

The work that the risen and living Saviour is doing for us in heaven.
The work that He has done, and is doing, for us on earth in His Church.

There is yet a third line of consideration which to ourselves, individually, is the most important of all: I mean the result of the Resurrection upon our own lives. "Therefore," says S. Paul, "we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." ". . . if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the

dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." "For the law of the spirit of liberty in Christ Jesus hath made us free from the law of sin and death."

I have said, brethren, that one of the greatest questions of the day is the question, "What does the Bible say of the Church?" Let me conclude by joining another question to that: "What does the Bible say is the true standard of holiness for individual Christians?"

Brethren, are we not in danger of contenting ourselves by the false standard of mutual comparison, measuring ourselves by ourselves, instead of by the standard of the sanctuary, the standard which God has set in His own revelation of His Will?

No doubt the moral standard of Christian countries is something very different from the standard of morality in those heathen countries in which the light of the Gospel has never shone; but one danger now seems to me to be that we are too easily content to walk in the light of sparks of our own kindling; we are content to take our standard of holiness from the prevailing customs and opinions of the present Christian world, instead of going to the law and to the testimony, instead of looking at the Book which God Himself has given us for our guidance. The question for believing Christians ought surely to be, not what man says, but what does God say?

In the memory of the events which took place on

the evening of the first Easter Day, when the Saviour expounded to the needlessly depressed disciples the things in all the Scriptures concerning Himself, let us this Easter evening lift up our hearts to Him and ask Him to open our understanding that we may understand through the Scriptures what the perfect standard of godliness for Christians is, how we are to add to godliness brotherly kindness, and what the meaning is of adding to brotherly kindness charity. Let us not be content to take our standard of life from the present condition even of the Christian part of the world, but let us go back to the Scriptures and search them and ask the risen Saviour to help us to understand them aright.

Sermon II

THE RISEN LIFE

"*Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus.*"

Colossians iii. 17.

These words may be taken as expressing the practical result of this Epistle of S. Paul to the Colossians, one of the shortest, but one of the deepest, of the Epistles which the great Apostle has left us; for in it the Apostle sets forth shortly, but profoundly and completely, what the doctrine of the sacrificed Christ is in the Scriptures.

1.—He is the Image of the Invisible God; "in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"; "in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."

He is God; "by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." He is the Creator and upholder of all things.

2.—Next, He is very Man as well as very God, and

as such He is the *Redeemer*, the Reconciler of God to man and of man to God.

He is very Man as well as very God, and as such our *Saviour*.

He is our Redeemer. In Him we have redemption through His Blood, the forgiveness of our sins; we were as debtors hopelessly involved by sin. He took the bond, a note of hand by which we were bound, and destroyed it, nailing it to the Cross in His own Body, and thus cancelled the deed which was against us. Blotting out the handwriting which was against us, He took it out of the way, nailing it to His Cross; He discharged the debt for us, He gave Himself as our ransom.

He not only is our Redeemer but our Reconciler. When we were at enmity with God He made peace through the Blood of His Cross, reconciling all things unto Himself.

And again, He is not only our Redeemer and Reconciler, but our Restorer. Sin separates man from God, and when man was separated from God man lost that fullness of the Divine presence which enabled man's nature to work according to the law which God originally gave it, in perfect harmony in itself and in union with God. The body was subject to the mind, the mind guided by the voice of conscience; the whole nature was in harmony in itself, and in intimate supernatural union with God—man's reason, man's will, man's affections were in perfect union with the Divine Will. But sin broke it all up,

and Christ came to restore this peace in man himself as well as the peace between man and God. Thus redemption implies reconciliation and restitution. "He reconciled you," the Apostle says, "in the Body of His flesh . . . to present you *holy* and *unblameable* and *unreproveable* in His sight." Thus is the Christ personal, and, as in this Epistle, very God and very Man, our *Redeemer*, *Reconciler*, *Restorer*, in short, our Saviour. The Redeemer, for He delivers from sin and frees from bondage the heart and soul of the Christian, and saves the sinner and obliterates all sin.

But there is a further truth revealed to us in the Epistle which tells us so profoundly and so briefly how we are to regard the Christ as revealed to us in the Scriptures.

The Apostle sets before us the Christ as the Head of the Church, which is His Body.

It is in this way that the Apostle brings home to us the reality of our reconciliation with God, and the restoration of the Divine image which should enable man's nature to be again in harmony in itself, and in living union with God.

"Christ," says the Apostle, "is the Head of the Body, the Church": and we, he says, are to hold fast "the Head from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."

In other words, the Christ of the Scriptures is represented to us as the source from which life and energy

are communicated to the members of His Church as to members of His Body, thus restoring the unity and the order which man by his sin had lost.

This vital connection of Christians with the living, ascended, life-giving Christ as the Head of His Church is the note, then, of this Epistle. By the Saviour's victory upon the Cross God has delivered us from the powers of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son, so has He made us meet to be partakers of the saints in light. We were slaves in the land of darkness, but God rescued us from this thraldom, He transplanted us thence and settled us as free colonists and citizens in the kingdom of His Son, in the realms of light.

"If ye then," says the great Apostle, after thus pointing to the risen and ascended Saviour as the Head of the Church, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, Who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."

In God's mercy we have been spared to go through another Lent and to keep another Easter festival. Now, practically, what can all this mean to us? There ought to be at least some results of the holy season of Lent which God has given us with all its services, sermons, addresses, prayers, and Eucharists. We ought to try and secure some definite results, for

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as the years pass by one after another the mere going over the theory of Christianity in our minds will not bring us nearer to God unless it finds some expression in our daily lives.

First, then, there can be no doubt that we should resolve by God's grace to keep further from our sins.

Sin has a hindering and blinding influence: it prevents our seeing how sinful sin is, and hides the way which should lead us nearer to God.

Even what we call little sins wilfully repeated will do this: they are like the flakes of snow which, in themselves, are almost too light and powerless to effect anything, but as they fall one upon another at last they blind and hinder a man in his journey and they baffle our latest and proudest means of motion. The snow drifts, which this winter have stopped our railway trains, were made up one by one out of little flakes of snow which, of themselves, were powerless.

Now Lent is given us as a time of quiet reflection to prevent this dangerous accumulation of sin. One first result at Easter should be that we have a clearer knowledge of our sins, in order that we may, in the power of the risen Life, keep further from them. Let us think of this for a moment in *three* ways:

(1) There may be definite sins which still beset us; it may be pride, or anger, or envy, or jealousy, or lust, or sloth, or covetousness. If Lent has been rightly used we ought to know what it is, we ought to have given it up, and to have been sorry for it, to have asked God to forgive it for

Christ's sake, and to resolve to do it no more, to keep further away from the persons, the houses, the circumstances with which our sin has been connected; we ought to resolve to avoid the occasions of our sins.

(2) This definite presence of a besetting sin may, by God's grace, have been removed in former years, and yet the effects of past sin may remain in the present character. "Our past sins," it has been said, "live on in our present inconsistencies." They may have left our character uneven: we may be unable to get rid of the thought of self even when we are doing right (self-consciousness lasts on after wilful self-seeking has passed by), and so the purity of our motives may be impaired; we may be unable to reprove what is wrong in others from fear of anger in ourselves; unable to praise the good in others and rejoice in their success because the root of envy and jealousy, though broken, is still within us; in many and different ways we feel ourselves still hampered.

Or we may be able, as people say, to forgive, but we can't forget, or unable to love those who have disappointed us and done us wrong.

Even parents sometimes feel it difficult when they have been disappointed in their own children; wounded love is hard to heal in many different ways.

The discipline of Lent and the clear light of Easter should make this clear to us, that we may know when still to watch and pray, that we be more really free to live as men who have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the realms of light.

This is the first result of Easter; it should be for us as a new rising again from the death of sin to the life of righteousness; it should bring us further from our sins and nearer to God.

(3) A third great result should be the discharge of the daily duties of life from a *high motive*: the Apostle says: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above."

This at first sight might seem to require a mode of life which to most of us would be hopeless; it seems to point to a life away from the usual duties of the world, but it is clearly not so. From this same Epistle we see that was not the Apostle's meaning, for in the words of our text he has said: "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus," and he goes on to speak of the duties of wives and husbands, father and child, master and servant. All ordinary duties of life are to be continued, but to be discharged with the recollection of the life above; they are to be done in the Name of the Lord Jesus.

Servants are not to go through their duties merely with eye service to please men, but to remember that they are answerable to the Lord. Masters are to remember that they, too, have a master in heaven.

This is in reality just what our life requires to make it truly Christian. We need not go out of the world, but we need to do our daily duties with a greater consciousness of the supernatural, with a surer Christian

spirit; to draw near unto Him with a greater boldness, to think of Him in the daily life.

In family life, husband and wife are to love their children with Christian affection, "in the Lord." Children are to show a Christian obedience.

Servants are to do their duties.

Masters are to pay their servants as Christ has commanded.

How, we may ask, are we to do *all* in the Name of the Lord Jesus as He would have it done, according to His Mind and Will and by His Power?

Where will you find the Mind of Christ?

Where will you get His Power?

In the society which He founded, and which we call the *Church*.

Sermon III

THE RISEN CHRIST, THE LIGHT OF LIFE

"Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

Ephesians v. 14.

The inspired account of creation, after telling us of the general fact, in the well-known words "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," continues to give us a more detailed account, which opens with the formation of light, and concludes with a Sabbath day meditation. In Gen. i. 3 we read, "God said, Let there be light: and there was light," and then, after giving us details, the story of creation concludes with the first three verses of the second chapter, in which we read, "And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day, . . . and sanctified it." May we not learn from this two precious truths: that all light comes from God; but that if we are to see things as they ought to be seen we must get time to think; if we are to use creation rightly we must have times of rest as well as of work. Times to think about the things that God has shown us: for the material wonders and beauties of this world are object lessons intended to teach us something higher and more wonderful than themselves. This, S. Paul tells us plainly,

is the right view, "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal Power and Godhead." And this is surely the way in which the Blessed Saviour taught us to consider the works of Nature, the lilies of the field and the fowls of the air, ever pointing us onward and upward to think of the things in the Kingdom of Grace.

The parables point to something more than the natural eye can see; the voices of Nature mean more than the natural ear can hear. This is surely the spirit of the oft-repeated saying of our Lord, "He that hath ears to hear let him hear."

We know a little of the value of the natural light, how necessary it is for man to get about his daily work, to earn his daily bread.

We know a little, too, of the life-giving power which the warmth and the light of the sun possess, and the Bible tells us to lift up our hearts and think of something more wonderful, more necessary for man's well-being even than this. The Bible says "*God is Light.*"

The Psalmist had said, "With Thee is the well of life, and in Thy Light shall we see light": and S. John has told us that "God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all." It is a prime truth, and as such it is difficult for us to grasp in the fullness of its meaning, but we may understand by it one thing—the perfection of God's knowledge. God is Light; all things are open and naked unto the eyes of Him with Whom

we have to do; the light and the darkness to Him are both alike, distance is no hindrance to His knowledge; the past and the future are before Him as well as the present; He is the Everlasting Now. He sees all things in their true nature and in their relation one to another; He knows all things as they are, and their capabilities for further perfections. As God is spoken of in the Bible as "Light," so sin, the opposite of God, is spoken of as "darkness." "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light": "Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil."

It was to deliver us from this darkness that the Saviour came.

If we read the whole Revelation that God has given us, and take time to meditate upon it, we shall see that He has told us something more about the creation than is made known to us in the first chapter of Genesis.

In the first chapter of S. John's Gospel we read, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the Light of men. . . . That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

And so the Saviour has told us in His own words, "I am the Light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of Life."

Let this, then, be our Easter message to you, dear brethren, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Awake, arise, for He hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light. This is our condition now, even in this life—as Christians risen in Christ.

What, then, should be the practical result of this knowledge? The Apostle has told us—we should "walk as children of light." And the same Apostle has given us the explanation of what this should mean: "The fruit of the light," he tells us, for that is the true reading of the passage, "The fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth": these are strong, comprehensive words, and they contain the principles of a good life. We know in general what he means by goodness and its opposite—badness, wickedness, and vice; as children of light we are to do that which is good, and abhor that which is evil.

With this personal goodness there is to be righteousness. They are comprehensive words. Like the holiness and righteousness of the preceding chapter, they express, at least, to us, though they may contain more, the ideas of holiness towards God and righteous dealing towards men. To goodness and righteousness the Apostle adds a third characteristic or mark of the fruit of light, and that is truth, *reality*, *sincerity*, the opposite of all that is false; "putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour"; for, adds the Apostle, as children of light we ought to see that

"we are members one of another," and therefore the love of our neighbour is the true self-love, and that injury of our neighbour is self-destruction. Oh, that we could always walk in this light!

To these three great outlines of a Christian character —the *good*, the *right*, the *true*—S. Paul adds another test by which every true Christian may try his life to see whether his conduct is such as becomes a child of the true light—the Apostle's words are "understanding what the Will of the Lord is." That is to say, *the* point of inquiry which the true Christian would ask himself in regard to any matter of conduct is simply this: "Is it the Will of the Lord?" How does it look in His sight Who is Light, in Whom is no darkness at all? This is a practical way of looking at our Easter festival; we may ask ourselves how far we may have reason to hope that our lives are guided by the light of Christ, *i.e.*, by the light of Him Who is the only true Light of the world.

We have need to examine ourselves on this point: If Christ is not the light of our life we are still walking in darkness. There is a kingdom, a system of darkness, and there is a kingdom, a system of light. "The principle of the kingdom of darkness is self-love, and loving others only for self's sake. The principle of the Kingdom of God is loving God, and loving self and others for God's sake."

We might well ask ourselves this new Eastertide, which God in His mercy has allowed us to see, how far it is a reality to us, and to our children, and to the

social relations of our daily life. How far do we for ourselves realize the need of the supernatural light which comes to us from Christ for the guidance of our own lives? How far is the Gospel record of the life of Christ *the* pattern which we have deliberately set before ourselves as the model and standard, and how far do we, like the Apostle, continue to pray that we may know Him and the power of His Resurrection; is the aim of our self-denial and self-culture that we may become Christ-like Christians, that His mind may be in us, that we be conformed to the likeness of the Son of God? And if it is well with ourselves in this great matter, we may ask ourselves, Is it well with the children?

At the present time the education of the young is in danger of becoming a great trial and temptation to parents and to those in whose hands the management of the education of the young is placed. Knowledge now means a new kind of power, and this new power means money. While we welcome with thankfulness these new opportunities for our children, are we doing all we can to secure for them the one thing needful—the full knowledge of God in the faith of Jesus Christ? Is it the light of Jesus Christ that we acknowledge as our guide and aim in the education of the young?

"What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" It is recorded of one who had received the highest education, in one of our English Universities, that at the close of his life he

said, "Were it not for Christianity I should not have cared to live."

Once again we may ask ourselves this Eastertide, Does the thought of the light of Christ guide us in our social life, in our relations to our fellow men? Do we remember that all are made in the image and likeness of God? Do we remember that Christ took the nature that is common to all: do we remember that Christ died for *all*? Do we honour all men? Do we love the brotherhood? Are we trying in the complicated entanglements of modern business life to put away lying, remembering that we are members one of another? Do we remember to give a first place to the Saviour's new commandment and love one another? And are we striving to keep the measure and standard of His love more and more before us—Christ's love for us unto death? But the measure of death will include troubles, labours, inconvenience, pains, privations, self-sacrifice; this is the standard of Christ-like love. Are we trying more and more to make it the guiding light of our daily lives? This should be the result of the good news of Good Friday and Easter Day, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Thou hast delivered my soul from death, wilt not Thou also keep my feet from sliding, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?

Even so for all those who keep in sincerity this Holy

Festival of the Resurrection, may God give us all grace this Eastertide to awake more thoroughly out of sleep and arise from the death of sin, so that the light of Christ may shine upon us and enable us to see Him more clearly and to know Him better, and participate more fully in the power of His risen life.

Sermon IV

NEWNESS OF LIFE

"*In newness of life.*"

Romans vi. 4.

This is the day which the Lord hath made, and we should rejoice and be glad in it; and this is the ground of our rejoicing, that sin and death have been overcome and new power given to man. "That like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

There have been other days of great joy which were for the time new beginnings, but that joy did not last, it has waxed old and passed away. Such was the day when Noah came forth from the Ark after the waters of the flood had subsided; but man's heart again became corrupt, and he fell back again into sin. Such was the day when Israel was delivered from the power of the Egyptians, and they stood upon the sea shore and saw Pharaoh and his horsemen drown in the sea; but they sinned and their carcases fell in the wilderness.

Such was the day when God came down upon Mount Sinai, and gave Israel the law; but they could not keep it, and that which He intended to be for their peace became unto them an occasion of falling.

Such was the day when God brought again Israel's captive bands out of captivity, and they in their joy were as men in a dream; but they neglected the spirit of the law and trusted in their observance of the letter, and the Romans came and conquered them, and the adversary and the enemy entered into the gates of Jerusalem. All these days of joy which promised so fair, became, as it were, clouded over. The new waxed old and was ready to perish.

What is it which gives us confidence that the joy with which we rejoice to-day will last? Why will the newness of life, which is ours to-day, never wax old and pass away? It is because our joy is based on the risen and ascended and living and life-giving Saviour. His own words are the ground of our confidence: "Because I live ye shall live also." "He died unto sin once, but in that He liveth He liveth unto God."

Here is the permanent ground of our joy: that we have a Saviour Who by His death has destroyed death, and by His rising again has become unto us the eternal source of an endless life.

By His death He paid the penalty and the ransom for our sins. He shed the Blood of God upon the Cross, for us He stained all His raiment—it was enough for the cleansing of all humanity. He made there by His one oblation of Himself once offered, a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. He bore our sins in His own Body on the tree—by His stripes we are healed; He, as the good Shepherd, gave His life for the sheep.

Here is the unchanging imperishable ground of our joy to-day: that the guilt of sin is removed, that the penalty for sin has been paid. It is true that we, on our part, have our work to do; God works, but we must work with Him. God's way in religion is as in the affairs of this life, God helps the man that helps himself.

If we rejoice to-day that the guilt of sin is done away, that the ransom has been paid, we must be sure on our part that our repentance is sincere, and then we ought not to let the past take the heart out of our future. We ought not to be morbidly melancholy and constantly worrying ourselves over our past sins, but just give ourselves up thankfully to the joy and the love which is the blessed portion of all truly penitent sinners.

But our joy of to-day should not stop short in the assurance of the forgiveness of sins—in the pardon of the past.

Our joy of to-day points to something more positive, to the present and to the future. Our joy is in newness of life. It is not merely the change from an old to a new commandment, but it is the gift of a new life. Christ has risen that He might become the new Head of humanity: that as in Adam all die, so in Christ all might be made alive. "The first man was of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit."

If Christ be not risen, then our faith is vain, we are

yet in our sins; but Christ is risen indeed, and has ascended far above into the heavens, there to appear in the presence of God for us. There He lives, there He reigns, there He is become to us a life-giving Saviour that we may not only be pardoned for the past but walk with Him now and for the future in newness of life.

A new life implies new powers; a new heart, a new mind, new powers to renew our will. The natural eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him, but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit. This is one reason why I am so anxious that you should all be confirmed, that you may receive the fullness of the gifts of the Spirit in order that you may know the things that are freely given to us of God.

The newness of life implies a new object, a new aim, a new end to our living. Our new life comes from the risen and ascended Saviour. Our life is hid with Christ in God. If we be risen with Christ, then, in our new life we have received new capacities, new powers to seek those things which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. The new powers which we have received from the risen and ascended Saviour make it possible now for us to set our affections, our minds, on things above, not on things on the earth.

Newness of life implies not only that we ought to do this, but that we have the power to do it;

and not only that we have received new power to do it as in obedience to an external law, but that our very heart's desire is changed and made new, so that the things which we naturally despised we value, and the things which we naturally hated we love, and hate the things which we naturally desired.

And this newness of life we know will never wax old because it flows into our very being—our body, soul and spirit—from the risen and ascended Saviour, as the golden oil in the Prophet's vision flowed from the living olive trees into the golden bowl, and from the golden bowl through the golden pipes into the seven lamps which hung on the golden candlesticks.

This is the ground of our joy to-day, this is the ground of our confidence that this newness of life will never wax old and pass away, because it flows from the risen and ascended and ever-living Christ.

And now, brethren, you can understand why it is we are so anxious that you should all be full members of the Church of Christ, in the fullest possible way—because the Father having "put all things under His Feet has given Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body—the fullness of Him that filleth all in all."

This is that which makes S. Paul pray for the disciples at Ephesus, that the eyes of their understanding and of their hearts might be opened, that "they might know what is the hope of their calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His

power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."

In the Apostles' Creed, as we recite it now, after we have expressed our belief in God in the words, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord," and "I believe in the Holy Ghost"—after this confession of our Faith in God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost—the next clause, as we recite the Creed, is "The Holy Catholic Church." It follows next after I believe in God—I believe in the Holy Catholic Church—in some of the earliest forms of the Creed as it was recited in the middle of the third century there was a slight difference, sometimes the clause "Holy Church" stood last of all at the end of the Creed, sometimes a word was added—*through*—"through the Holy Church"; thus declaring in express terms what elsewhere is always implied, that it is through, or by our being incorporated into the Church as Christ's Body, that we have the Communion of Saints, remission of sins, the Resurrection of the flesh and the life everlasting.

Thus the Church is put before us as the covenanted system of God's Love—as the sphere in which God has provided that the new life of the risen and ascended Saviour should come to each one of us.

This is why at Easter-time we rejoice to hear the wedding bells ring out through the land; in many a country village, in many a crowded town, in these next days of Eastertide the wedding bells will ring, and we rejoice to know that those to whom God has given that best possession—the possession of another's love, are coming to God's Church to ask for His own peculiar blessing which, in the marriage service, He gives to all that ask Him, to rich and poor alike. We rejoice that they come to ask the blessing which God in His Church provides to make their matrimony holy, that their new life in their new home may be inspired by the new Life from above, that they may live together in holy love unto their lives' end.

This is why we rejoice to see parents bring their children to the Font, that they may be made members of Christ, the children of God, and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven: "That the old Adam may be so buried that the new man may be raised up in them; that all carnal affections may die in them and that all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in them; that they may have power and strength to have victory and to triumph against the devil the world and the flesh." This is why we rejoice to see the Godfathers and Godmothers fulfil their promise and bring the young people as they come to years of discretion to the Bishop to be comfirmed by him, that now when the battle of life is beginning the young people may be defended from the assaults of the enemy by the heavenly gift of Grace, and daily increase in God's

Holy Spirit more and more until they come to His everlasting kingdom.

That is why we rejoice with joys unspeakable when we see the young people, after their confirmation, come for their first Communion, there to receive, in the way the Lord Himself has appointed, His most precious Body and Blood—His very Self, to be the strength and refreshment of their souls.

This is the ground of our great joy to-day as we rejoice with confidence in the newness of life, which is ours, to live in the power of the Spirit, Who is come to us from our risen and ascended Lord. In this newness of life we may be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, knowing that the supply of His Grace is inexhaustible, coming as it does from our risen and ever-living Lord.

This consciousness of new power should lead to some definite and practical results.

1.—There should be an increasing *trustfulness* and *peace*. "He that believeth," the Prophet said, "shall not make haste," i.e., need not be restlessly running hither and thither to seek for help, in uncertainty from whence it may be obtained. He believes in God, he believes in Christ, he knows how he may draw near to God, he knows that His Grace is sufficient for him, and in what channels it will be found. And again, the Prophet says, "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength"; he knows in Whom he has put his trust, he can stay upon God. "If God be for us," says the great Apostle, "who can

be against us?" "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

2.—With this peaceful trustfulness should follow two results: The old things will pass away, the new things will live and grow in us. The old things will pass away. What are they? S. John tells us: "The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; these are not of the Father, but of the world, and the world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." Yes, thanks be to God, this is a practical experimental truth, the hold of sin gets weaker, the attraction of sin less frequent and less strong; we find that in the newness of our life we can resist the devil and he does fly from us; the chain of old habits with which the strong man bound us breaks at last under the power of Him Who is stronger that the strong, i.e., the risen and ascended Lord. He overcame the world for us; through death He destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil. He has broken the snare and we are delivered.

And as old things die and pass away from us, the new things live and grow in us. What are they? S. Paul tells us in the Epistle to the Galatians—"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance"; love, which finds its own peculiar enjoyment in the Communion of the Saints and the sinless love of the brotherhood; a love which is not even bound by this,

but which, as S. Peter expresses it, adds even to brotherly kindness, charity. A joy, which is Christ's own gift and which He has promised no man can take from us. A peace which passeth all understanding, passes that is all man's conclusions of human reasoning—the gift of God beyond what we ask or think.

It is true that if we live in this newness of life which comes to us from the risen and ascended Saviour, we must be prepared to be led on and up beyond the limits of this present world, till we rise in the power of the precious stream to the level of the rock from whence it flows, even the Rock of Ages in the everlasting hills.

Here we must be content to be as strangers and pilgrims with no continuing city. Here, from time to time, we must be prepared to see those we love called to the higher exercise of this life above; but they are not removed from the covenanted sphere of the Divine Love. They have but passed from the Church militant to the Church at rest, waiting till the days of the mediatorial kingdom are accomplished. Then, when the kingdom is delivered up to God the Father, and God shall be all in all, to take their place in the Church triumphant and to follow the Lamb from glory to glory.

"In newness of life."

It is a new life which comes to us from above from the risen and ascended and ever-living Saviour, its power is most real, its aim and end most clear; it is not only to free us from sin, but to make us holy—

"without holiness no man shall see the Lord"—but this new life is to enable us to see Him as He is, "because I am holy be ye holy." It is not only to enable us to live here in this world, but to fit us for the home that is above.

Oh, let us give ourselves up, then, trustfully, lovingly, to the purifying guiding influence of this new life. At present it is but imperfectly realized by us; as we live in it here in this world below it is still subject to the shadows of passing clouds. There will be some days of dullness, but if we persevere, the longer we live the greater our confidence becomes that the clouds will break at last, and the more surely can we see there is light beyond. All earthly things may pass away, we may outlive those whom we have loved, there may be none left for whom we care as once we did, but the guiding Hand of God becomes plainer to us; and we see what the guiding of His hand means, it is to guide us in the power of the new life, even on through the valley of the shadow of death, till it brings us to those bright shores of love where they are awaiting us who, in this new life have passed through death unharmed, and are with the Saviour Who as on this day rose from the dead and is alive for evermore.

Sermon V

SPIRITUAL LIVES

"If when we were enemies, we were reconciled by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by His life."

Romans v. 10.

On Easter Day we reach the central truth of the Christian religion. That Christ has risen means that Christ was buried; that Christ was buried means that Christ had died; that Christ has risen means that Christ is alive, and alive for evermore.

Thus Easter Day is for us the central truth of our religion. It points both to Christmas, when He took our nature upon Him, and to Calvary, when He offered it upon our behalf upon the Cross; it points forward to the Ascension and the Throne, to a Saviour Who ever liveth to make intercession for us.

But while we all accept this far-reaching reference of Easter Day to the past and the future, is there not a danger lest we forget its meaning for us *now* in the present? The Resurrection of Christ has placed us *now* in a new sphere, in a new life, and brought us into contact with new forces: the Resurrection of Christ is for us a new power. This is the way in which S. Paul prayed that he might regard Easter, he prayed that he might know Him and the power of His

Resurrection. S. Paul did not regard the Resurrection of Christ merely as a miraculous event in the past, nor merely as a pledge of our resurrection at some future day when the Saviour should come again, but he looked upon it as a source of new power *now*, which should enable him to live a new and higher life, a spiritual life and not a carnal one.

We do well indeed on Easter Day, and at all times, to look back to the past, but it is rather as giving confidence in the present and hope for the future in the spirit of the Psalmist, "whoso is wise will ponder these things, and they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord." We look back to Christmas Day and Good Friday as pledges of His love towards us both *now* and in the life to come.

When we look back two truths stand out before us of endless interest and infinite value.

We see our pardon comes from above, not from below; it comes from God to us, it comes down from heaven to earth, its origin is in God, not in us: the source of our pardon is in the everlasting hills, it flows from the unfailing fountain of the love of God. Therefore it is that we are "not consumed."

God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son into the world that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. Our pardon came to us before we came to Him; "we love Him because He first loved us." It is this that commendeth His great love to us that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us; when we were yet with-

out strength, when we were sick with the sickness of sin the good Physician came to heal us; when we were blind He opened our eyes; when we were like the man in the parable going down from Jerusalem to Jericho who fell among thieves, who stripped him and wounded him, and left him half dead, too weak to raise himself, though with something of life remaining: so Christ in due time came to us, when we were yet without strength. He died for the ungodly, giving us with the pardon this ground of hope, "if when we were sinners, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by His life." This is our first comfort. As we look back we see that the risen Saviour is the same as the crucified, the same Who was born at Bethlehem, the same Who came down, down from heaven.

Our pardon originated in the infinite love of God.

Secondly, when we look back we are to see and remember that the pardon is complete. "He came to give His life a ransom for many," i.e., for all. The debt of sin is paid off, the debt of the sins of the whole world, the hand-writing which was against us, the bond which the enemy held for our conviction has been plucked out of his hand, it has been cancelled, it has been torn up and abolished by the nails of the Cross, "the Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." The atonement—the at-one-ment, i.e., between God and man has been accomplished, God and sinners have been reconciled; reconciled back again into the relation which God intended man

originally to have, and placed in a condition which shall enable him at last, through and in Christ, to be with the Father in the enjoyment of that love and glory which the Saviour tells us He used Himself to have with the Father before the foundations of the world were laid.

This is the great thought that fills our minds and hearts to-day when we look back: our *pardon*. It is sure, it comes from the unchanging love of God; it is complete, it is purchased by His own Blood; "it is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?"

S. Paul expresses this when he says, "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

But while Easter Day tells us of a *risen* Christ, and, therefore, bids us look back to His death, it tells us more. Easter Day not only tells us of our pardon, but also of a new state; Christ has not only obtained for us pardon, but He has given us power, a new life: "Because I live," He says, "ye shall live also": the life of man—humanity—has had a new beginning offered to it. As God is working out His great purposes in the history of the world He sees two men, the first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit; the first man is of the earth, earthy; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. From the first Adam there flows down to us the polluting and poisoning stream—sin, misery, death. From the second Man there come to us the correlative remedies—righteousness, happiness, life.

Christ has not only obtained our pardon and given us hopes of fuller glory, but He has made it possible for us to be in a state of grace NOW. The power of Satan has been broken, sin has been dethroned, it is God's will now that sin should not have dominion over us. We may have powers now, if we will, so that we need not let sin reign in our mortal bodies to obey it in the lusts thereof: "For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death."

Easter Day tells us of the victory over sin and the power for a new life. We are, as Christians, in a state of grace, and we may live, and we ought to live, spiritual lives.

The thing that makes the difference between living in the flesh and in the spirit is having the Spirit of God dwelling in us. This gives life to our spirit and enables us to hold communion with God. What the full meaning of such a mysterious communion implies we can only imperfectly apprehend; but the language of Scripture justifies our highest aspirations. It tells us that we may be partakers of the Divine Nature, that we may become members of Christ, that Christ can dwell in us, that the Spirit of Christ can be in us. Nay, the Saviour has said: "If a man love me, my Father will love him, and We will come and make our abode with him." Now that the Saviour has won pardon for us, and placed us in a state of grace, we are actually and at present accepted by the Father and received into His favour. We cannot but think that He Who has

done so much to redeem us, will still do all that is needful to complete our salvation, that He will finish this work *in* us which He has finished for us, so as to present us whole without spot to the Father. We may then, here in this life, have the spirit of Christ and walk in the spirit. This is not to be regarded as a rare privilege belonging to a few great saints, but as a necessary condition of the Christian life. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of His," but we all may have Him if we will. Easter Day tells us that, as Christians, we are risen with Christ, and we should seek those things which are above, that we should set our minds and affections on things above. In a word we ought to live spiritual lives.

It is, then, also important that we should have a right idea as far as may be of what we mean by a spiritual life. It does not mean the life of a spirit as distinct from the life of the body. Spiritual lives are led by ordinary men and women in the discharge of the ordinary duties of daily life; *many* are living spiritual lives who take the Will of God for the rule and guiding principle of their lives; in it their spirits learn from the Spirit of God.

The spiritual man and the carnal man both live in the body, both may be engaged in the same business, the same trade, the same profession; but with the carnal man self is the centre of his life, and his own inclinations and desires and interests and pleasures are the moving and the ruling principles.

With the spiritual man God is the centre of his life,

God's Will the ruling and controlling principle. We need not go out of this world to live spiritual lives, but whilst living in the world we must live above it. Now, this is what the Apostle S. Paul means by a spiritual life, as is plain in his Epistle to the Colossians, where, in the third chapter, he appeals to the Christians at Colosse in the true spirit of our Easter feelings. "If ye then," he says, "be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above, set your affection on things above," and yet the conclusion of his letter is made up of exhortations for the right discharge of the ordinary duties of daily life. "Wives submit yourselves to your own husbands, husbands love your wives. . . . Children obey your parents, fathers provoke not your children to anger. . . . Servants obey in all things your masters according to the flesh. Masters give unto your servants that which is just and equal." In a word, whatsoever ye do, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, then you will be living a spiritual life. The spiritual life is the life which is controlled and ruled by the Spirit of God and lived in His power. "They that are after the spirit do mind the things of the Spirit." The things of the Spirit are the designs of God for us, His Commandments and the purposes of His Kingdom, our communion with Him, and with our brethren in Christ. In short, once more *His Will for* us.

While, then, we need not go out of the world and give up our daily duties, we must give our minds to God; we must take time daily to meet with God, in

prayer, in reading His Word, and meditating on the truths we read. Our care should be that having put on the new man we may be renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created us; that, by the help of the Spirit, spiritual understanding, spiritual wisdom, a full knowledge in the things of the Spirit may be an increasing reality to us; that year by year we may grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; that each Easter, as the holy season comes round, we may have a larger share in "all the riches of the full assurance of understanding"; that we may be fitted with the knowledge of His Will.

We ought never to allow Sunday to be a wasted day, however much business may press or pleasure tempt us. It is the Lord's Day. It should be, as to its main employment, as a Holy Day, a day spent with God, to pray that we may have the Holy Spirit, a day in which we most deliberately and for a longer time set our minds, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, to learn the mind of God, so that when Sunday is over and we return to the ordinary duties and business of our lives we may still live spiritual lives, because our life is controlled and guided by the Spirit of God.

Here, then, is the ground of our present Easter joy and hope. "If when we were enemies, we were reconciled by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by His life."

His Death is the pledge that atonement has been made for sin, complete and universal atonement; His Resurrection is the pledge of the acceptance of that

atonement; and the earnest of the Spirit is the pledge of His application to ourselves. The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit; when God gives the love of Himself, the will to be His, the spirit whereby we call Him Father, we cannot doubt but that He accepts, pardons, justifies, and will finally glorify and perfect the believers.

Verily this is the day which the Lord hath made, we ought to rejoice and be glad in it.

Sermon VI

THE VICTORY OF FAITH

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

1 S. John v. 4.

Our Easter joy depends on a fact which we have never seen. It depends on the fact of a life that has passed through death; it depends on the fact that One Person died and rose again, and is alive for evermore, but out of sight.

We are made to feel strong to-day that, as Christians, we believe in the reality of that which is invisible. If Christ be not risen our faith is vain; all our hopes depend on that which we cannot see. It is to be a fundamental principle with us that we walk not by sight, but by faith; we agree and confess to-day that though we still live in this visible world with all its attractive wonders, yet as the real aim and object of our lives we look "*not* at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen, for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal."

This is, then, what we have to remember, that the invisible is more precious and more lasting than the

visible. That the invisible is to be the ruling and guiding power by which our lives are to be directed if we would pass safely through the many deceitful attractions and seductive influences which make up that mixture of good and evil which we call the world.

This, S. John tells us, is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. But "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." The life of faith implies a life that is ruled by the invisible. It is not easy, perhaps not possible, for us to define exactly what we mean by the world.

In the Bible the phrase "the world" is evidently used in different senses. It is used to express the sum of God's creative work, "by Whom also He made the world." In this sense it means heaven and earth, the sea and all that are therein. It includes all that we can see in the universe and the many worlds beyond, for we "believe in One God, the Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible."

But there is another sense in which the phrase "world" is used in Holy Scriptures. It is used to denote the mixed forces of good and evil with which we have to do in this life. It represents the result of sowing the tares amongst the wheat; both are to grow together until the harvest. It is this element of evil from which the Saviour prayed that His disciples might be preserved. While He was with them in this world He kept them; now that He was to leave them His prayer for them is not that they should be taken out of the world, but that they should be kept from the evil (i.e.,

from the Evil One). The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life—this is the evil in the world which we have to overcome.

This is the meaning of the Saviour's assurance for us when He says "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." This is the condition of the great reward which the Saviour offers to us all: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My Throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His Throne." And our text tells us the great principle upon which the battle is to be fought, and the victory won, and the reward obtained.

"This," the text says, "is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." We must take care, then, that the visible does not shut out the invisible. We must take care that it does not lead us to forget it. Our safety in passing through this world of good and evil will depend on our walking by faith and not by sight. It will depend on our continually looking upward and beyond. It will depend on our remembering that the things that are seen are temporal, while the things that are not seen are eternal. Our faces must show the true purpose of our lives. They must be the faces of men who are going to Jerusalem, even to the Jerusalem that is above.

But, now, if we would live rightly and with minds fully open, as far as we can see, to the mind and ways of God, we must give our attention and consideration to another line of thought. How are we to regard all this wonderful and beautiful world in which we find

God has placed us, and which we believe that He created? How are we to regard our Lord's command to consider the lilies of the field and the fowls of the air? How is it that our Lord based so much of His teaching on the works of Nature? Why did He so constantly invite those whom He was teaching to look at and think about the visible things of this world, as we see them, round about us? The sower, the tares, the leaven, the net, the lilies, the sparrows falling, the look of the sky at morning and evening; in these and many ways the Saviour calls our attention to the things that are seen. This is no new difficulty, but it is of very great importance. We should consider it well, and obtain the true answer.

It was so considered many years ago by the great S. Augustine, and he made a very simple but true and beautiful reply in some such words as these:—

"Perchance someone will say, heaven, earth, the sea and the moon and stars, the beauties of the sky are in the world, and God made them, why should not I love that which God has made?"

"Well," he replied, "God forbids not that you should love them, but He forbids that you should so love them as to find in them your bliss. It is as if a spouse should give his betrothed a fair and precious ring, and if she to whom the ring was given should love the gift more than the giver. Would not her heart be convicted of unfaithfulness, even though that which she loved were her lover's gift? If she said in her heart 'His gifts are enough for me, I care not to

see his face,' where were her true love? The spouse gives the gift for this end that he himself may be the more beloved in it." This is surely the true way of looking at the beauty of created things, and it has been exquisitely expressed by many of our own poets, by none, perhaps, with greater sweetness than by Wordsworth.

He speaks of his delight in Nature in the early days of his youth. "Nature," he says, "was all in all to me. I had no need of any charm by thought supplied, or any interest unborrowed from the eye." That was the beginning of his pleasure, but then he adds, as he grows older, that time is past. "For this do I not faint nor mourn, nor murmur, for I have learned to look on Nature, not as in the hour of thoughtless youth, but learning oftentimes the still sad music of humanity. And I have felt a presence that disturbs me with the joy of elevated thought, a sense sublime of something far more deep. Therefore am I still a lover of the meadows, and the woods and mountains—rather say love them with warmer love. Oh! with far deeper zeal of holier love."

This is surely what we need; not to shut our eyes to the beauties which God has entrusted to us; not to make the visible the end and aim of our happiness, but through the visible always to be led up to the thought of the Invisible. This is the difference between the right and the wrong loving of the world. We are right when the aim and governing principle of our life belongs to the Invisible, for then we are

really looking not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen. Then we are walking by faith; then we may hope to have our share in the victory that overcometh the world.

And, surely, to us Christians to-day such language is no mere indefinite feeling or uncertain poetic emotion. We know what we mean when we say that the aim and governing principle of our lives belongs to the Invisible.

Christ is our life, Christ Who as on this day rose from the dead and has ascended out of sight through the heavens, and is now sitting on the right hand of God; He is invisible save to the eye of faith, and our life is hid with Him in God. This gives a definite meaning to the words "Set your affections on things above," for where our treasure is there will our hearts be also.

As Christians we walk by faith and not by sight, and we can see Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, now crowned with glory and honour. This is the full meaning of the words "the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." For, "Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" This, then, is the real ground of our Easter joy:—

"Jesus lives! For us He died,
Then alone to Jesus living,
Pure in heart may we abide,
Glory to our Saviour giving. Alleluia!"

When we apply our finite minds to these infinite

truths, and try to be clear and definite, there is always a danger of losing more than we gain. Yet we may, and we ought, humbly to do what we can. When we know that, as Christians, our lives ought to be ruled and governed by the Invisible, let it mean for us that our lives ought to be directed and ruled by faith in Jesus Christ, and that in two principal ways: (1) as our example, (2) as our life. This two-fold relation to the risen and ascended Saviour is essential to the right understanding of the Christian religion. Christ is our example, and Christ is our life.

This truth is essential, as many of the Collects in our Prayer Book imply, as in the collect we were saying last week:—"Almighty and everlasting God, Who, of Thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent Thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon Him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the Cross, that all mankind should follow the example of His great humility; mercifully grant, that we may both follow the example of His patience, and also be made partakers of His Resurrection."

To follow the example of His patience: that is to make Christ our example; so to be partakers of His Resurrection: that is to make Christ our life.

To take Christ for our example, and to strive to be Christ-like Christians is not so very hard. We cannot, indeed, hope to do it perfectly, but we can see by God's help what we should aim at; the excellence of His life approves itself to our Christianized moral sense, we can see and feel its beauty. His humility, His purity, His unselfishness, His gentleness, His tenderness to

little children, His thoughtfulness for the hungry, His care for the sick, His provision for His mother, the example of His daily work in the little carpenter's shop at Nazareth, His patience when misunderstood and misrepresented, His untiring self-sacrificing love even to His death—all this we can see and admire; and, as Christians, our bounden duty, both as a nation and as individuals, is to strive to follow the example of His life, and to be a Christ-like people. This must be part of our meaning if we are to make the truth of Easter a practical reality. We must fashion our lives according to the now invisible pattern of the risen and ascended Lord. This is the type of character which the great Empire which is now entrusted to England should endeavour to exhibit to the world and to the Christian nations around us, and to the millions which at present know not Christ, but who, in different degrees, are put under our protection and care; if we call ourselves Christians we ought to be a Christ-like people.

But this is not all. If our Easter joy is based on the revealed Will of God in Holy Scripture then the relation of the risen and ascended Christ to us will not be merely that of an external example, but a new source of life. "Because I live," the Saviour Himself has said, "Ye shall live also."

The Apostle speaks of Christ as our life, and reminds us that it is, at present, hid in God. If we are to rule our lives by faith in Christ we must not only look up to Christ as the pattern of our lives, but we must look to Him as the source of new life and power

by which that pattern may be followed. "As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. We were buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in the newness of life." This is the joy of our Easter Communion, because that in it we become partakers of Christ. He dwells in us, and we in Him. "Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood," He has said, "hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him. As the Living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me."

It is as branches of the true vine, as members of the Body of which Christ is the Living Head that we believe we shall have power and strength to have victory and to triumph against the devil, the world, and the flesh.

This is the knowledge of Him which S. Paul continued to pray for. This is the power of His Resurrection which faith tells us may be ours to-day, and in which we may hope to overcome the world.

England has been given a unique place in relation to the world. Are we doing all we can, both as individuals and as a nation, to overcome the world, so that the kingdoms of this world may become the Kingdom of our God, and of His Christ?

Oh, let us rise up with Him to-day and pray that we may do more for Him.

FROM THE LIBRARY OF
JACK W. HAYFORD

Sermon VII

THE CROWN OF GLORY

"The crown of glory that fadeth not away."
I S. Peter v. 4.

The great festival of Easter is the assurance to all believers of an abiding and endless perfection.

In this our present life we are continually being checked and disappointed by separation, change, failure, decay and death. We never continue in one stay; the glories of our gardens fade, the corn in our fields must be cut, the sky is never long without clouds, the long days of summer shorten and winter comes again. The irresponsible joy of childhood is soon checked by the need of separation and preparation for the work of life; family life is all too quickly broken up and becomes a pleasure of memory rather than of fact. Our own plans and the work of our life are continually broken by the failures of others and the failures of ourselves, and very soon the signs of age become visible, and we know that our bodily powers must become less; that they must droop until death works out the ruin of this body completely. All this we know from daily experience, and the tendency of it all is to leave a sense of incompleteness, of failure. We see how little we can accomplish even in what is called a long life here.

But now to-day in the brightness of our Easter

festival a sun has risen which will never set. The triumph of Easter is a triumph of life through and over death. "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God." And not only is this a triumph for Himself in His Own Person, but for us also. "Christ is the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the Resurrection of the dead. As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." "Because I live," the Saviour says, "ye shall live also." "We shall not indeed all sleep, but we shall all be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed, for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." We cannot, indeed, imagine what this change will be like, but we know that "there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it will be raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it will be raised in *power*." It does not, indeed, yet appear what we shall be, but we shall be made like unto Him. "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious Body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."

To-day we see the clouds lifted which hung before so heavily over the valley of death, and we can see the path of life running on and running up through the valley right up to that Presence where we know there is the fullness of joy, even at the right hand where there is pleasure for evermore. We do not yet fully know as one day, please God, we shall know, but we see that the bands of death have been broken and the Saviour is risen, and we can trustfully say it is enough: "When I awake up after Thy likeness I shall be satisfied with it."

Easter Day shows us, then, the triumph of perfection, the acquisition of glory in spite of a time of humiliation, suffering and apparent failure. This should renew our hope in ourselves, in our striving after holiness. The risen Saviour means that the death upon the Cross was not the death of a mere man, but He is declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead. The *guilt* of sin, then, is done away, the ransom has been paid and accepted for the sins of the whole world; the risen living Saviour opens a new fountain of life for us; the *power* of sin is broken.

Not only ought we to resolve with the power of the risen Saviour to keep from wilful deeds and words of sin, but we should strive to keep sin at a greater distance, and not wilfully to allow it in thought. It is better to be tormented by evil thoughts for ever so long a time than to be pleased with them for one moment.

It is for us to-day, when we see the risen Body of the Saviour, to lift up our hearts, and to think what it will be, please God, one day with ourselves, when this corruptible puts on incorruption, and this weakness is raised in power; when the powers of human nature are no longer weakened or disarranged by sin, when the body, soul and spirit will be in perfect harmony with the Will of God.

We ought to-day to set before ourselves the standard of moral and spiritual perfection, and to consider the words of the Saviour in the Sermon on the Mount as having a practical bearing on our daily conduct. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Again, as Easter Day should be to each one of us the assurance of an abiding and endless perfection, "The crown of glory that fadeth not away," which is being prepared for all those who love His appearing—so should it encourage us to renew those standards of perfection which ought to regulate our dealings with our fellow men. The physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual condition of society is in most parts of the world, indeed in many parts of England, so far below the perfection which God intended man to reach when He made Him in His own image and likeness, that we are in danger of giving way in despair and accepting the lower level of the present condition as the limit of the excellence which we can reach.

To-day we see the misused powers of the world over-

thrown, and the powers of death and hell broken; the stone and the seal are made useless, broken and rolled away. The forces of the kingdoms of this world are put to shame, "the keepers of the grave did shake and became as dead men," the bands of death were broken because it was not possible that He should be holden of them. Through death He destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and we see Jesus, the Perfect Man, as well as very God, rising from the tomb free and glorified to finish His Father's Will.

It is for us to-day, when we stand by the grave and empty tomb, to think of that triumphant perfection which has been attained for man by Christ taking of the manhood into God. And then it should be for us to reconcile ourselves with God and renew our faith in the unapparent capabilities of man, to look round and see in what ways we can bring back the laws of nature to do their work according to God's perfect Will; surmounting all those physical causes which deprive man of his bodily strength—the unhealthy district, the houses unfit for human habitation, the insufficient food and adulterated drink, the overwork, and irregular work, and the dangers from despair if there be no provision when the strength for work is over. Let us not be weary in well-doing in these lower matters, but keep the standard of perfection before us, the ideal of what might be, the thought of "the crown that fadeth not away."

But man, we know, is not to live by bread alone.

Man is not truly man unless he cultivates his mind, his higher gifts of intellect in all their wonderful powers of application as we see them in art and science in all that wonderful development of man which we call education. There is much to be done, there are many thousands yet who have advanced but a little way in the development of the higher powers of their minds. To-day, when we look beyond the ruin which sickness and death cause amongst us, when we see there is an abiding, endless perfection in the life beyond, when we see the crown held out which fadeth not away, we should reconsider what efforts we can make to help all our fellow men to reach the standard of perfection in knowledge which God would have them reach in their day. But this is not all. If man does not live by bread alone, if he is more than mere animal life, neither does a man's life consist in the things which he possesses. We have not brought man up to the perfection which God would have him reach if we have only enabled him to live successfully in this world. "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the Will of God abideth for ever." Education, if it is really to bring man to his intended perfection, must be religious education. It must teach man the knowledge of God's Will, and show him how he can obtain power to do it.

And this, in conclusion, leads me to speak to you of the Church. The Church is the society which the Saviour founded to teach man God's perfect Will, and to give him the means of grace which should

enable him to do it. "Go . . . and teach all nations, baptizing them with the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

It is true that a believer looks with fear and shame, and with a kind of disappointment on the present state of the Church, and laments with a just and reasonable sorrow over many things for which he sees no remedy: the weakness of discipline and authority, the low tone of Christian morals, the loss of the sense of the supernatural, the incomplete extension of the Church, the number of those who are only churchmen in name, without any clear manifestation of faith and life. All this, and other things besides, may well make people cry out: "Can this be She of whom such glorious things are spoken? The city of the Living God? The city at unity in itself? The dwelling place of the Holy Spirit? The Bride of the Son of God?" Truly it is wonderful to see a divided Christendom, and enough to perplex serious and thoughtful minds, yet we must not let go the standard of perfection which has been given us.

Truly we have seen the Saviour arise from the tomb. He is the Bridegroom of the Church, He is the Head of the Church, He knows her needs, He can give her new power from the inexhaustible fountain of His own divine life: as He lives by the Father so the Church draws her life from Him; outwardly the Church may seem to be torn in sunder, but He will preserve the inner unity which is needful for her life; the Church is the Body of Christ.

Look up again at the Cross and see to what length the powers of evil may be allowed to have their way, and yet they can go no further than the Divine Will permits. His feet were fastened to the tree, His hands nailed on this side and on that, His very side was pierced, yet not a bone of Him is broken.

Look on to what appeared even worse—when the cry came forth from His sacred lips: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit." What happened then?

In Christ there were two unions, the one hypostatical or personal, i.e., the union between the two natures, the Divine and the human in the One Person of Christ; the other vital, i.e., between the true parts of the human nature, the body and the soul. What happened then at the death was the separation of the vital union, the Body was laid in the tomb and the Soul passed into Paradise, as He said, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." The vital union was dissolved, but not the Personal. The Divine nature remains unseparated from the human nature, and will remain inseparable for ever (if this were not so the Resurrection was no resurrection, but a new Incarnation). The vital union between the two parts of the human nature was for a time broken, but the deeper unity between the two natures survived and the union of the soul and body was restored again when the time was come which in the eternal counsels had been fixed, and on the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures.

In the Collect for to-day we say that God in His Almighty Power through His only-begotten Son Jesus Christ has overcome death and opened unto us the gate of eternal life. Opened the gate of eternal life! We are instructed, then, to look beyond the decay and disturbance caused by death to the crown of glory that fadeth not away, the symbol of endless imperishable perfection, and satisfaction and glory.

Let us think of this in reference to the Church. She is the only means which the Saviour has appointed for bringing man to his true perfection; she is the means which the Saviour has appointed for completing the work He came to do—to reconcile man back again to God, and in God to His fellow man. In her God has promised man's greatest needs shall be satisfied, in her man may learn the truth and attain to holiness, rest that is, for the head and the heart.

To-day, then, we see the triumph of the risen Saviour out of such apparently hopeless defeat. Let us pray again to Almighty God that as He has opened unto us the gate of everlasting life, and has put into our minds good desires, so by His continual help we may bring the same to good effect, that we may inquire and learn, if need be, what the Church is; that we may give more attention ourselves to live according to her laws, and bring up our children and families according to her teaching and customs, that we may make real sacrifices of ourselves and our substance, as others have done before, and as, thank God, there are those

amongst us who do still, that we may remember the ideal of perfection which is before us. How Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but be holy and without blemish, and crowned at last with the crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Sermon VIII

THE OVER-RULING PROVIDENCE OF GOD

"All things work together for good to them that love God."

Romans viii. 28.

The revised version is "To them that love God all things work together for good," and in the margin another reading is given from some ancient authorities —"God worketh all things with them for good."

These last words, perhaps, bring out most clearly the truth which in any case the text is intended to teach us, that God Who rules over all, the Maker of heaven and earth, the real and true providence, is on the side of those who love Him, over-ruling all things for their good.

This great ground of our confidence and comfort comes home to us Christians to-day with the new assurance of the risen Saviour. In the Death and Resurrection of the Saviour we see the Divine plan of our redemption accomplished. We see the risen and ascended Saviour (and in His hands the keys of hell and of death) resting at the right hand of God in the place of honour and power on the Father's throne. He has accomplished the work that His Father gave Him to do. The world is now redeemed. The sacrifice has been offered which is sufficient for the

sins of the whole world. On Christmas Day we can see what manner of love the Father has for us. God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son into the world that all who believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. On Good Friday we can see what manner of love the Saviour has for us, for "greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." He has died for us, He has loved us and has shown us the measure of His love. He loved me, the Apostle says, and gave Himself for me. And now, on Easter Day, we think of Him as the risen Saviour, the conqueror of sin and death. If any man sin he knows that he has now an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins. The Apostle's conclusion of all this is, "If God be for us who can be against us?" "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" This is the root and ground of our Easter joy, that the plan of our redemption is accomplished, that there is pardon for all our sins, and grace to make us holy and make us fit for the place which the Saviour has gone to prepare for us.

But, then, while we think of all these things, it may be well for us to remember how different the outward circumstances are to this inward purpose which God is bringing about.

How often are we tempted to say, or think, "it does not seem as if all things here are working together for

good; can it really be true?" How little did the outward circumstances of the first Good Friday and first Easter morn seem to the Apostles and the faithful few as if God was really over-ruling all for their good! To the outward eye, on the first Good Friday, the Crucifixion was nothing else but a great catastrophe—Jesus, for Whom they had given up their earthly homes, had been betrayed, and apprehended and bound, insulted, condemned, crucified. It was apparently the failure of all their hopes, and the triumph of envy, and the powers of this world.

On the hill of Calvary, where the three crosses stood, to the eye of sense it must have seemed as if the moral government of God had utterly failed, and the powers of this world had triumphed, and all the next day, the Jewish Sabbath, there came no deliverer: there was no sign of any change. Even on the first Easter morn when the holy women went to the sepulchre where the body of Jesus was laid, to bestow their loving services upon the dead, they heard no sounds as of gathering storms to assure them that God was stirring, and that His power was to be manifested. They saw no signs of brightness to tell them that God was coming. They might well have asked, as of old, "If God is working all things for our good, why are we thus left? Where are all His miracles as in the days of old?" Yet we know now that God has not forgotten to be gracious. In His own time the bands of death were broken, the Light shone out even in the darkness of the grave. When the Sun of Righteous-

ness arose the earth trembled, and the angels came down from heaven and showed the holy women the place where the body of Jesus had laid. The corn of wheat had fallen into the ground and rested the appointed time, and now it has risen ready to bear fruit an hundred fold. The body of the risen Saviour was the divinely prepared means for the regeneration of the world. The world was redeemed, and the way for its sanctification was made manifest, while outwardly all things looked like confusion and failure. Things were in reality getting ready, working, working for the good of those who would love God.

The contrast between these two positions—the certainty of the secret working of God to carry out His own purpose, and the apparent confusion and failure through which this purpose is often brought about, are well worthy of our constant remembrance. As we look back over the history of the world many examples might be given of apparent ruin, through which God was working out a higher good. Two such catastrophes stand out above the rest, and have been called *unparalleled*. One was the destruction of the Jewish State and Temple; the other the breaking up of the Roman Empire.

These two catastrophes, though in point of time, some four hundred years apart, illustrate the same principle of God's mysterious ways. The overthrow and the passing away of the old, in things most deeply concerning human life, that the new might

come—the apparent confusion and failure while working for good.

The fall of Jerusalem, the place where God had chosen to put His Name there, the ruin of the Temple (the symbol of God's presence with His chosen people) was the apparent extinction of the visible kingdom of God on earth; the doom pronounced by the world power on the claims and hopes, which to those who lived under them seemed the most sure of all things—the fall of Jerusalem to the Jew must have meant something more terrible than we can conceive. The fall of the Roman Empire was the overthrow of the greatest, the strongest, and the most firmly settled State which the world had ever known, and yet the one catastrophe cleared the ground for the Christian religion, and the Christian Church, and the other made room and prepared materials, not only for new nations, but for new forms of political and social order, then beyond all possibilities of being understood. Apparently all seemed to be given over to confusion and ruin, while in reality God was so overruling and guiding as to make all things work together to those who would love God.

Such a belief in providence guiding and governing the nations of the world needs amongst us Christians still careful cultivation. Few people, I hope, now deliberately exclude providence from history and maintain that the nations rise and fall by some external indecipherable law of change without conscience and without reward, as some are said to have done. But

do we all live in the spirit of that prayer, which is provided for us in the Prayer Book for the fifth Sunday after Trinity? "Grant, O Lord, we beseech Thee, that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by Thy governance, that Thy Church may joyfully serve Thee in all godly quietness, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Such a prayer is a Divine act of Faith in God's government of the world.

But all this may, perhaps, seem to some to be too far removed from our personal individual concerns. There is a passage in the Bible which brings this truth of God's government of the world very close home to each one of us; the passage occurs in the history of the Patriarch Jacob and his sons. You will remember the history; we have had it brought before us so vividly and practically on the Sunday mornings this Lent. You remember how Joseph's brethren conspired against him, out of envy, and sold him into Egypt for a slave; you remember how the famine broke out in the land of Canaan, and Joseph's brethren went down into Egypt to buy corn; you remember how Joseph questioned his brethren about the old man, their father, and their younger brother, Benjamin; you remember how Joseph bound Simeon, and refused to give the corn unless they brought their younger brother Benjamin with them; and you will remember the cry of anguish which the demand wrung from the lips and heart of the aged Patriarch Jacob—"Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take

Benjamin away: all these things are against me." That is again and again the cry of the natural man as he looks only at the circumstances of his life—"all these things are against me,"—I can stand it no longer, you will "bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave." So, indeed, it seemed on the surface, but what was the real state of the matter? If we look at the other side of the picture and see it from God's point of view, as He was ordering the lives of the twelve brethren and of their father, and making the circumstances of the great kingdom of Pharaoh work together for their good, so far from any harm being about to befall his sons as Jacob feared, Simeon was bound but for a few hours, Benjamin was to go down to Egypt and receive the special honour due to his innocency; and Joseph, so far from being dead, was preserved in the good providence of God to be the instrument of preservation to his father and his brethren. It is a wonderful lesson, and comes very near to many of us. We cry out: "all these things are against me," when in reality they are all working together for our good. Most of us who have lived any length of time can remember occasions when we were tempted to use the Patriarch's language, and say, "all these things are against me": and yet the Apostle would have us believe that all things, however contrary they may seem, are ordered, or permitted, by His providence for good "to them that love God." Pain, sorrow, sickness, poverty, disappointment, which seem to keep us back and to be a hindrance to

the accomplishment of our best endeavours, are all to be included in the things which are under the control of the Divine providence, and are in reality working for our good; nay, further, even spiritual trials, difficulties, infirmities, temptations, may turn to good, and will turn to good, if *our will* does not waver, and if our love be true.

Thus Joseph could say, even to his brethren: "Now, therefore, be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God sent me before you to preserve life." And S. James could say: "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations: knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

Surely the truth is our heavenly Father can see better than we can what secret dangers lie hid in the innermost recesses of our souls. He knows the first germs and springs of our character long before they appear before men, or even to ourselves. And those hindering circumstances and sorrows, which tempt us to cry out that all things are against us, are in reality but the working of His fatherly love; "for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."

To-day we are encouraged to renew our trustfulness in the over-ruling wisdom and love of God, by beholding the contrast between the apparent failure, collapse and catastrophe of Good Friday, and the glorious

victory of Easter Day; all through the last days of Holy Week it seemed as if God's purpose would fail and the powers of man triumph—"of a truth against Thy Holy Child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together." It seemed to the human eye a combination of the powers of the world which it would be hopeless to oppose, and yet we know how the record in the Book, written for our learning, concludes: " . . . were gathered together to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done"; apparently all things were most contrary, in reality all things were working together for good to those who love God.

We have to-day, then, a renewal of the assurance of the over-ruling power and love of God: the question remains, "For whom shall all this be?" The answer is given in the text, it is, "for those who love God." "All things work together for good to them that love God." But how are we to know whether we love God or not?

One broad outline the Saviour has given us—"If ye love Me, keep My commandments." If a man love Me he will keep My words, and My Father will love him." Here there is the first great principle for our guidance, and let us remember that this is God's way of guiding us, He gives us general principles, broad outlines, and leaves us, by degrees and through different means, to discover how these general

principles can become a practical guide for our daily lives.

"If ye love Me, keep My commandments." The honest desire to know God's Will and obedience to what we believe to be His Will—keeping His commandments—this is the first great principle: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"—this is the first thing necessary if we would have the support and comfort of the text, "All things work together for good to them that love God." This is what the Saviour Himself said to the young ruler who asked what he should do to inherit eternal life—"Thou knowest the commandments: Do not commit adultery. Do not kill. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness. Defraud not. Honour thy father and mother." Here is a revelation of God's Will which any one, who is in earnest, may understand. If we want to have God on our side we must attend to these things, whatever it may cost us, to the cutting off a right hand, or plucking out a right eye. But for many of us, my brethren, the difficulty perhaps lies further on, and we have so far, by God's help, learnt to rule our lives by His commandments—we do try to do God's Will and yet at times things seem to be so contrary, our best endeavours seem to fail, our favourite plans are thwarted, we wish to keep God's commandments, and yet things do not seem to be working together for our good. What can we say to this? It may, perhaps, help us if we realize the danger of confusing *our plans* with God's command-

ments. God's commandments represent His will; our plans may not be the best way of carrying out that Will; after all, we know that we know very little, we can see enough to see that there is much beyond. Our plans, then, may not be really great enough, or good enough, to carry out the great Will of God. What have we to do then? In our relation to human laws while *obedience* is the first and great essential, yet a truly loyal and worthy citizen is not content merely to obey the laws of the country in which he lives, but he penetrates through the outer letter of the laws into the minds of those who make them, and he finds his life to be governed, not so much by the fear of the outward letter of the law, as by the righteousness and wisdom of its inner spirit. So it may be with regard to God's commandments: the sun, moon, and all the host of heaven sing praises to the Lord by their mere obedience, because He has given them a law which cannot be broken. But young men and maidens, old men and children, praise the name of the Lord, for "His name only is *excellent*."

Man is able not only to obey God's laws, but to rise above the laws to the knowledge of the Law-giver, to see something of His infinite wisdom and goodness and love. It is in this way that rising above the mere fear of the law to the Person of the Law-giver we can learn to love God; fear is the beginning of wisdom, fear of the Lord, but perfect love casteth out fear, and we learn not only to obey the law, but to love the Law-giver. It is when the personality of

the Law-giver comes through the law that we can properly obey through love.

Something like this must be done with regard to our plans, we need so to subject them to the Will of God that, like a transparency, they should never hinder us from seeing Him and His most perfect Will. Then when His Will is kept visible in and through our plans we shall be enabled to love that Will, and, if need be, to let our own plans go. So long as His Will is fulfilled, we shall be enabled either to let our own plans fail altogether, or to let others carry them out and do the work we wished to do, or to let the work wait for God's own time, and spend our days like David, the man after God's own heart, in works of preparation, leaving to others who come after us to build; enough for us, then, if we have made perfect and kept and learnt the pattern of His Will.

In the chapter from which I have taken my Easter text S. Paul makes known to us as far, perhaps, as in any way it is made known in any part of Holy Scripture, our relation to God's eternal purpose. We must not expect to understand more than is revealed, but we ought not, through fear, to fall short of it. The Apostle speaks of our present state as of one of hope and patience, and he connects hope with God's eternal purpose towards those who love Him. He traces that purpose in its accomplishment so far as the justification of the believer through faith in Christ, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. "Whom He called, them He also justified, and whom He justified them He also

glorified." Then the Apostle concludes: "What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" These words sum up in a short sentence the ground of the Easter joy and hope.

If the whole of God's work is carried on with this purpose from all eternity, if God is over-ruling all, and brings good for us, His people, even out of seeming evil, if His Will and intention is on our side, who can be against us? Who, at least, can do us any real harm? Reason cannot deny this, but it takes faith to believe it, and strong faith to realize it and act upon it. Only make it a subject of meditation and prayer, and you will find that there is so much in the thought that you may feed upon it, and grow strong as you feed. Take hold upon the strength of the Almighty, and you have no cause to fear man or Satan, or all that can threaten to befall you. One excuse for weakness and alarm may yet remain—you may say "I fear I may not be of those for whom this blessing is intended"—and the answer is: "You may be if you will, for every Christian has a right to it, and ours it is if our will is but with God."

God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son into the world that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us ALL, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" If you will all things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

Sermon IX

THE GUIDANCE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

"The Lord is my Shepherd, therefore can I lack nothing."

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me. . . ."

Psalm xxiii. 1 & 4.

When we were baptized two names were used and placed together—our own Name and the Name of God.

The words used were: "I baptize thee in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," and we were then made members of Christ, the children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.

The knowledge of that to me is very precious, the mercy of God's Name and what He is is very comforting, but we knew nothing about it then, and of all that we have since learnt the most important and the most precious is the meaning of those two names, our own Name and the Name of God. At that time, if we were christened according to the Prayer Book of the Church of England, we made three great promises through our godfathers and godmothers. I wish to speak of two of them—the first promise was that we would renounce the devil and all his works,

the pomps and vanities of the world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh.

Looking back we can see that it was quite right: that it was quite right to renounce the devil, for he is our spiritual enemy, and would work our ruin if he could. It was quite right to keep clear as soon as possible from the corrupt practices of the world, to keep our hands, while small, from picking and stealing, our tongues from evil speaking, lying and slandering, to hurt nobody by word or deed. It was quite right to check the first consciousness of the sinful lusts of the flesh, and to keep our bodies in temperance, soberness and chastity.

All this, with the experience of after life, we can see was quite right; it was on right lines for our after life, and the sooner we were placed upon that line of conduct the better for our present and future happiness. Yes, we can see now that it was quite right, but at the time when the promises were made we knew nothing about them. We couldn't, we were but infants, very likely asleep.

The second great promise which we made was that we would believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith. It was a great promise, to promise to believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith. What are they? They are chiefly these:—

We must believe in God the Father, that He is our Father.

In God the Son, that He is our Saviour.

In God the Holy Ghost, that He is our Sanctifier,

This, we know now, is the meaning of the Name of God into which we were baptized, as God has unfolded it and taught it to us since.

He let us make that great promise because, when we were baptized, He made us His own children and bound us to Himself with the golden cord of His fatherly love, and He knew that He would teach us about Himself that we might know Him and love Him through eternity.

I have chosen the Twenty-third Psalm for our subject this evening because, as we Christians may need it to-day, in the light of our Easter festival, it may very well suggest and express the true grounds for our most true and abiding happiness.

The dominant thought of this beautiful Psalm is obviously trustfulness and security in God.

We may read the Psalm through with the thought that it represents to us the watchful care of providence. It represents God to us as a Shepherd watching over, tending, feeding His flock. "The Lord is my Shepherd, therefore can I lack nothing. He shall feed me in a green pasture (make me lie down), and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort." These words suggest safety, sufficiency, rest and peace.

God is kind, He is our Father. When we look back over the pathway of our several lives we can all see the golden cord of His fatherly love by which He bound us to Himself when He made us His own children at the font, and by which He has led and taught us from our youth up until now.

And this is not all; it is not merely that the good providence of God has provided for our bodily wants, as a shepherd feeds his flock with the natural food on the green pastures and at the spring; but when we read the words of the Psalm, "He shall convert my soul, and bring me forth in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake," we cannot confine these words to God's providential care in giving us the blessings of this life. The words mean this, no doubt, in the first place, but they imply far more: they suggest also God's dealings in grace, and who can tell where the one begins and the other ends?

It was this fullness of the providential care which moved the heart of the Patriarch Jacob when he blessed the sons of Joseph in the words: "The God which fed me all my life long unto this day . . . bless the lads." He could wish no greater blessing for the lads than that the God of his own experience should take them under His care and bless them.

In Jacob's life there had been days of darkness, of suffering and of fear. In his early days his life was hard and uncertain. His own summary of it is most pathetic: "Thus I was, in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night, and my sleep departed from mine eyes." Later on in his history a darker, deeper trouble befel him. When the famine was sore in their own land, and Jacob sent his sons to buy corn in Egypt, Joseph the governor refused to continue to give them corn unless Benjamin, their youngest brother, came with them into Egypt. This

last trial seemed at the time too hard for Jacob to bear, and he cried out in momentary despair: "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away; all these things are against me"; for so it seemed at the moment, and yet we know it was not really so. Simeon was bound, probably but for a few hours; Benjamin was to go that he might receive the distinguishing reward of his own innocence.

Joseph, so far from being dead, was living in wealth, and honour and power; living himself and raised up by the good providence of God to be the life and support of his father and his brethren and their families. For the moment the great cloud of God's disciplinary love hung heavy and dark over the mind and heart of Jacob. But when the time of relief was come the cloud lifted and Jacob saw again the golden cord of the Father's love by which he had been led all through his days, and at the close of his life he could frame no better blessing for the children of Joseph than that the God of his own experience should take care of the lads: "The God that fed me all my life long unto this day . . . bless the lads."

The God of Providence and the God of Grace is one God, even our Father which is in heaven. His Will is to feed us in green pastures, to convert our souls and bring us forth in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake: The Lord is our Shepherd, He is the good Shepherd, He will watch for, care for, protect our bodies and our souls.

And so again, to-day, in the light and strength of

our Easter festival we are encouraged to give the fullest meaning to the words "The waters of comfort": "He shall lead me forth beside the waters of comfort." To us Christians the words of the Psalm raise thoughts of the deepest meaning: they remind us of the wells of salvation. They suggest to us where the real source of our strength and refreshment is to be found: "With Thee is the well of life, and in Thy Light shall we see light"; all life flows out from Him. At this season of the year, in springtime, when signs of new life are breaking forth all around us, it is well to remind ourselves that all comes from one well of life; He opens His hand and fills all things living with plenteousness. The Christian knows of Whom it is said, "In Him was life," and Who said of Himself, "I am the Light of the world"; through Him and in Him we find our true light of life, He is the way, the truth and the life. These are the waters of comfort, the waters of real refreshment of which, whosoever drinketh shall never thirst, for they come from the well of life even from God, and God is the real rest and satisfaction of man. This is our real ground of comfort and hope, that God is our Shepherd, and that He is leading us to Himself. To us Christians the promise is not afar off, but very nigh. "The water," the Saviour said, "that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

The well from which this water flows is the well of life; it cannot fail. In us, alas, through our fault, our

grievous fault, it may sometimes seem to fail, and the dryness of our own spirits and our hardness of heart may tempt us to lose hope, and, almost, to despair, but *faith* will rekindle hope when we reflect that the water of the Spirit comes from the well of life, and that in God's good time it will flow again like the rivers in the south, i.e., like the streams flowing again over the river beds which it has long left in the summer drought.

This is the experience of almost all of us; yes, and even more, for we have known those of whom the world has lost hope, like the prodigal son, or like the man whose name was legion, with whom men were afraid to have any thing to do, men who have been branded by society as abandoned and hardened. We have seen what the grace of God can do even with such, changing death into life and turning the hard rock into a standing water, and the flint stone into a springing well.

Most men know what it is to be led to the waters of comfort.

I have reminded you that when we were baptized into the Name of God, God made us then His children, and bound us to Himself by the golden cord of His fatherly love, and as we look back over the pathway of our lives we can see year by year with increasing clearness, how truly this golden cord has led us. Yes, but we Christians can see even more than this: the golden cord means even more than the Father's, it is a *three-fold* cord, and the Name of God

means for us the love of the Father, and the love of the Son, and the love of the Holy Ghost. This is our Shepherd, this is He Who is leading us to the green pastures and to the waters of comfort.

We have spoken a word of love of the Father, and of the love of the Spirit. To-day we are bold to see in the words of our Psalm a further manifestation of the love of the Son.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me."

Yes, for us Christians the words may be taken to express the great secret of our Easter joy. The assurance of the companionship of Jesus, even through the valley of death. There is no reason why death should separate us from God; death does, indeed, separate the soul from the body, but not from God. The Saviour's assurance to the penitent thief is an assurance of His power, and gives us a safe passage through the dark valley, and a conscious life beyond: "To-day shalt thou be with *Me* in Paradise." These words are evidence for us that the soul can pass through the dark valley unharmed, and retain the power of self-consciousness and of recognizing again those who have gone before. The comfort of the Saviour's promise involves the two-fold assurance of life preserved through the dark valley, and of the power to recognize again in Paradise those whom we have known before on earth, "To-day shalt *thou* be with Me." Yes, it is the recognition of the persons!

To-day all true Christians are rejoicing in the victory over death: by His Death He has overcome death (this is our great Easter joy), and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life, that through the grave and gate of death we may pass to our joyful resurrection. "Jesus lives! henceforth is death but the gate of life immortal."

The Lord is my Shepherd—in Eastern countries the custom was for the shepherd to go before, the flock following. The Lord is my Shepherd should mean, then, for each of us, "I have set God always before me"; we should try to keep the three-fold cord of the Divine love always before us and strive to follow it: "Draw Me and I will run after Thee." There is the mysterious drawing of the Father, "Except the Father draw him"; there is the paradoxical drawing of the Son, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me"; there is the drawing, the leading of the Holy Spirit, Who leads the sons of God.

The Lord has showed us great things to-day, He has been Himself through the dark valley, and is risen again. He knows the way, He is our Shepherd, He can show it to us, only we must trust Him, we must let Him lead us in His own way, we must not hesitate, or doubt, or fear, if at times the way seems steep, or narrow, or hard, or stony, it is the way of the Cross along which we are to go; but it is also, we know to-day, the path of life which leads to God Himself, in Whom is the fullness of joy even at His right hand, where there is pleasure for evermore.

Sermon X

THE LIBERTY OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD

"*The glorious liberty of the children of God.*"
Romans viii. 21.

These words, with their context, express the great end of creation: they speak of the "earnest expectation of the creature," of the deliverance from "the bondage of corruption," and they speak of the "glorious liberty of the children of God."

It is, indeed, a fitting text for Easter Day, the great day on which the snare was broken and we were delivered. And yet, while our hearts are rightly filled with joy and hope, we shall do well to remember that the words are the words of prophecy as yet only partially fulfilled. Many of the Old Testament prophecies we have seen fulfilled, but there are prophecies of the New Testament for the fulfilment of which we are still waiting. "We see not yet all things put under Him, but we see Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour."

We do not know for certain what may be the full meaning of the text as regards the freedom of the creature from the bondage under which it is now held, nor, indeed, do we know fully what the freedom and glory of our own risen bodies will be. We have seen

the brightness of the body of Jesus, on the Mount of Transfiguration, and to-day we are listening again to the record of the new liberties and powers of the body of the risen Saviour, but for the present for ourselves we must be content to wait before we see the full result of our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies. We must wait for this before we can fully know the blessedness of the glorious liberty of the children of God.

And yet, while we do not presume to explain the full meaning of these prophecies, there are some things which we can do to help forward this great purpose. We may, if we will, by God's help, see some things that we can do which we know are good for us now, and which point in the direction of our future blessedness.

The prophecy refers to the future of the whole creation and to that of man. The prophecy for creation is that in part it is to be freed from the bondage of a purposeless vanity to which, by man's sin, it has been subjected.

Is there not something here that we may understand, and take our part in? For the world by which we are surrounded there is to be freedom from suffering, and corruption and a purposeless vanity. Is not this actually going on—may we not help in it? We can see certainly a tendency in the forces of Nature to become subservient to the needs of man; they are being made more and more to contribute to man's wealth and comfort and sovereignty. The coal, the iron, steam and electricity relieve man from many lower

forms of labour: the machinery in our manufactories, works under man's superintendence, our railways and our steamships carry man and his goods by sea and by land without the burden of his own bodily fatigue. Our scientific inventions relieve man from pain and make surgical operations possible which prolong life —toil and pain are thus being relieved. The material elements of the universe are very free from the bondage of vanity and render increasingly great services to man: our railways and our telegraphs are removing the separating influences of space and time, they are means by which man can hold more frequent and closer intercourse with his fellow man. They make for unity, and all such scientific progress is securing so far the freedom of the creature from the bondage of vanity, and by it we can see something of the high purposes and end of creation.

So far, our consideration of the forces of Nature may be regarded as satisfactory; we can see that their purposeless vanity is being diminished, and that they contribute increasingly to the sovereignty of man. But there comes a very real and important question. What is the end for which man uses his increasing power? What is the purpose for which man uses his increasing wealth? Does he give the glory to God? Does he acknowledge God to be the author and giver of all these good things which he possesses? Are we seriously trying to carry out God's great purposes for the world? This is a question which we might well ask ourselves to-day while we are rejoicing in our Easter freedom.

But if the text is to be to us a living reality we ought to endeavour to see its application more directly to ourselves. How far may we hope that the glorious liberty of the children of God is true of us? Is the vanity of our lives decreasing? May we hope that the purpose of our lives is more settled and more in accordance with the Divine Will? Has our self-examination during the past season of Lent given us real grounds for hope that sin has less dominion over us, that the chains of evil habit have been broken, that God has set our hearts more at liberty, and that we can now, by His grace, more easily run the way of His commandments? The stages of the road by which liberty is generally attained are not difficult to see: they are self-knowledge, self-mastery, self-culture and then self-sacrifice. Men are willing to toil to bring the powers of Nature to their highest end; we ought to be ready to do at least as much for ourselves. Self-knowledge—"Know thyself" was a maxim even among the heathen. Self-mastery—the subjection of the lower part of our nature to the higher, the restoration of nature according to the original will and purpose of God, the recovery of the true relation between our passions, our reason, our conscience, our will, the sanctification of our body, soul, and spirit—this is part at least of the meaning of the glorious liberty of the children of God, and it is a part of which we may have experience *now*.

But we need to remember that the liberty of which the text speaks is the liberty of the CHILDREN OF GOD.

It is not to be obtained by the mere natural working even of the moral law; the liberty of the children of God is the outcome of supernatural power. Man's original righteousness was forfeited through man's sin. The sonship of creation must be restored by the sonship of *adoption*; "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

Our claim to be the children of God is that we have been made members of His Son—this is the true ground of our Easter joy, that His Resurrection has obtained a new supernatural power for us. He has broken the snare of sin and delivered us from its guilt and power. Our liberty is in and through Christ; the ground of our liberty is the Incarnation. It is worked out through the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the Ascension, and the mission of the Holy Ghost. It is not enough that we should be trying to be good in our own strength without the help of God, it is not enough that we should admire the moral excellence and beauty of the character and life of Christ. It is not enough that we should look back to the great scene on Calvary, where Christ offered up Himself as the one sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. We need to pass on from Good Friday to Easter Day, and even then not to rest merely in the acknowledgement of the fact of the Resurrection, but to know its *power*. This was S. Paul's idea of a true knowledge of Christ: "That I may know Him and the power of His Resurrection." It is that which leads us into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

This is the true life of the Christian faith. But, then, faith must be a total, not a partial, faith, a continuous, not a desultory, energy. Faith must be a light, a form of knowledge, a beholding of truth, which is *rest*. The Christian Creed is not a system, but a life; it implies a complete devotion of mind and heart, and of conscience and will to Christ. This life and this liberty are based on supernatural truth and power; it is this supernatural truth, this truth revealed through Christ, which makes us free from the guilt and bondage of sin. This supernatural truth and power, this truth as it is in Jesus, comes to us as Jesus has provided that it should come by the ministry of the Word and Sacraments in His Church. It is as members of His Body the Church that we enter into and enjoy the full blessings of the glorious liberty of the children of God; the righteousness of Christ is our righteousness; because He lives we live also; Christ in us is our hope of glory.

Perhaps to some one here to-night this language may seem disappointing, and almost be a temptation to despair. Let me say to such an one, if such there should be, that it need not be so. Let me ask you: Are you really in earnest? Are you trying to know and to do God's Will? Do you want to be free from the power of your sins? Are you using all the means that Christ has provided for you in His Church? If so, then this is the message to you this Easter night. Do not despair. Taste and see, taste and you *shall* see, in God's good time, that the truth will make you

free from the guilt and the power of your sins. Sin shall not have dominion over you, you shall know in yourself with sufficient reality the glorious liberty of the children of God. This is the teaching of the Scriptures. This is the language of the ancient Church at Easter time. Let me read to you an ancient Eucharistic preface, "The time has come that we have longed for, what greater or better work can be found than to proclaim the might of our risen Lord? Bursting open the doors of the grave, He has displayed to us the banner of His Resurrection. Through Him the sons of light are born to life eternal; the courts of the kingdom of heaven are opened to believers. And by the law of a blessed intercourse earthly and heavenly things are interchanged. For by the Cross of Christ we have all been redeemed from death, and by His Resurrection the life of us all has risen again . . . even Jesus Christ our Lord."

Many of you, my brethren, will, I am sure, be able to enter into this thought, and say, This ancient faith is ours, and this, by God's goodness, this faith is being found afresh in our time, is increasingly becoming our experience; we do know something of the liberty of the children of God, and by God's help we will remain steadfast to the end, hoping for the perfect liberty in glory.

Sermon XI

THE LIVING AND REIGNING CHRIST

"And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth."

Revelation v. 6.

By God's loving mercy we have been permitted to see another Easter Day, and to take part in its services. *Deo Gratias!*

During the season of Lent we have been, as it were, preparing our Easter offering, endeavouring by self-examination, and prayer, and fasting, to lay aside whatever may still hinder the restoration of the image of God within us, so that we may offer and present ourselves—our souls and bodies—to God with a new purity and sincerity and thoroughness, in the power of the risen life.

Each year we live with God ought to increase our confidence in God. Mistrust of self and trust in God are two of the surest marks of spiritual life, and each year, as the power of our baptismal life develops, as the garden of our souls manifests the reality of the operations of the Holy Spirit, carnal affections die in us, and all things belonging to the Spirit live and

grow in us; we can see with greater clearness and hope that Easter Day rather than Good Friday represents God's good Will and purpose towards us. We can see that the Easter victory is meant to teach us that *life* and not *death* is the intended end of creation.

Every Easter as it comes round should imprint upon us the truth that in the end *good* WILL triumph over evil, though for reasons that we cannot fully understand until the appointed time, evil seems sometimes to prevail; but THEN evil will be put away and good will prevail.

Every Easter this great truth should become more clear to us through the experience of our lives, and so deepen our insight into the teaching of the Word of God. Such is gloriously the teaching of the last book of the Bible, the Apocalypse, the Revelation of S. John the Divine. In its frequent references and use of symbols it traverses the whole course of Revelation, gathering up, as it were, the whole purport of the real mind and Will of God: it presents to our view the picture of the downfall of Babylon, that great city, the representative of the world; and not only so, but the beast, and the false prophet, and the devil, the great deceiver, all are finally overthrown, and then there stands before us the new Jerusalem, in all the beauty of holiness, the city of God, the city that hath foundations, the eternal city.

This teaches us clearly that the forces, personal and impersonal, which have inspired mankind with false views of life and antagonism to God and Christ, will,

in the end, be completely subjugated! It is the victory of right over wrong, of the truth over falsehood, of good over evil: the revelation of the victorious Christ. Such is the irresistible lesson which the last book of our Bible leaves with us.

No doubt much of the teaching of the book of the Revelation is conveyed to us in visions and symbols and signs, many of which we are unable to interpret with certainty. Much of the book is prophetic, and looks forward to days and circumstances of which we as yet have no experience; many minor points, too, as in our Lord's parables, we cannot use for certain as the proof of doctrine, yet, by comparing Scripture with Scripture, we can see the meaning to be generally agreeable to the Word of God.

So these difficulties are no sufficient excuse for putting the book aside as altogether unintelligible. The book, like the rest of Scripture, is written for our learning, and is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction in righteousness.

The vision which I have chosen for our text to-night is one which cannot be effectively represented in painting or sculpture, but which suggests to us an idea which is perfectly intelligible and in harmony with other direct statements of Scripture.

It is the vision of the Christ Who became dead and now has become alive again, the vision of the omnipotent and omniscient Saviour as He is now upon His throne.

"I beheld," the seer says, "and in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." The Lamb, STANDING, but with marks showing that it had been slain, is clearly the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world. It is the Lamb by Whose death we have been redeemed, "forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last days for you."

The Lamb, standing though it had been slain, is manifestly Jesus Christ Who "suffered death upon the Cross for our redemption, making thereby His one oblation of Himself once offered, a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."

The vision is evidently a representation of our Lord's own words, "I am He that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death." But the vision is not merely of the Lamb now standing, though with marks of having been slain, but there is a remarkable addition, a Lamb with seven horns.

Among the symbols of the Apocalypse none is more frequent than the use of numbers. We may not, in-

deed, always be able with certainty to explain their meaning, but of the meaning of some numbers there can be little or no reasonable doubt; the number seven is used repeatedly, and always with the same meaning of perfection and completeness and power. So here the vision of the Lamb with seven horns represents to us the fullness of the power of the victorious Christ, and the vision is intended to impress upon the Church our Saviour's own words, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." But this is not all, besides the seven horns symbolizing the fullness of strength, there were the seven eyes "which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." The seven horns denote the fullness of strength, the seven eyes the fullness of vision or knowledge; the eyes of the Saviour reach to the ends of the earth. This is the true Easter lesson for the Church, Jesus Christ is risen to-day, Alleluia, and by faith we behold Him now crowned with glory and honour, omnipotent and omniscient, mighty to save.

This, then, is the Easter lesson that I would offer you; but we should all strive to recognize more clearly and realize more fully our relation to Christ as the Lamb standing by the throne with the fullness of power and knowledge, as the Lamb standing on Mount Sion, the Rock on which the Church is built, holding the seven stars which are the angels of the seven Churches in His right hand, as walking amidst the seven golden candlesticks which are the seven Churches. Surely these visions teach us the same

lesson that S. Paul prayed so earnestly that his disciples at Ephesus might learn, when he said: "Wherefore . . . I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understandstanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all."

This is, indeed, our great Easter joy and hope. But we must not stand merely gazing up into heaven wondering at the beautiful vision; we must try by God's help to bring it home to ourselves.

First, then, the vision of the living reigning Christ should enable us to realize more fully the reign of Christ in our own souls, the living Christ who dwells in our hearts by faith. He is to be a ruling, reigning power *there*; the power of Christ has shown itself and

assured to us our redemption; He has brought us "out of the horrible pit, out of the mire and clay," and has delivered us from the fear and the entanglement and defilement of sin; He has set our feet on the rock, and is with us to order our goings; we are to walk with God. Because He lives we live also. Instead of the reign of sin in the sphere of death the reign of grace has been substituted, tending towards eternal life through the mediatorial agency of the victorious Christ. Through the power of the living Christ we ought to expect that the prayer of our baptism will become true, and that we shall have "strength and power to have victory and to triumph against the devil, the world and the flesh," and, thanks be to God, this is increasingly coming to pass in the faithful members of Christ's Church.

But, while we thus thankfully remember the omnipotence of Christ to us who believe, we must also remember His omniscience. He Who hath the seven horns, hath also seven eyes which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. The knowledge of the Saviour as the living Head of the Church has a prominent place in the Epistles and in the seven Churches in the Book of the Revelation.

The words of the Saviour, "I know thy works," occur repeatedly, and again, "I know where thou dwellest, even where also is the throne of Satan"; these words tell us plainly that the eyes of the Lord are in every place, that He knows and considers the difficulties of our several lives, but while there is great

comfort in this knowledge for all those who are striving to serve the Lord, are not these words also words of serious warning?

What does the Saviour see when He looks down on Christian Europe? We might say when He looks down on Christian England; is there not still much work to be done? Is the work of the Church in our great towns, or, indeed, in all our country villages, and in our schools, up to what we have been accustomed to believe would be the standard of the mind of Christ? Is there not yet much to be done before those who call themselves Christians can be said to have reached individually the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ? And besides the individual perfection, does the Saviour see that unity amongst us for which He prayed—"that they all may be one?"

These are some practical reflections which we might make as we rejoice again in our Easter joy over the vision of the omnipotent and omniscient Christ.

And yet we must not stop even here. The seven eyes of the Lamb which are the seven Spirits of God are sent out into the ends of the earth. The mission of the Lamb is commenced, Christ offered Himself for the sins of the whole world; the searching light of His eyes reaches into every corner of the great heathen world, and what does He see? Not more than one third of the world is Christian yet even in name—India, Japan, China, Africa, in their millions, are still heathen: we cannot truly rest content with this; we

must act upon our faith if we would retain the vision in its full purity and strength; we must do this for ourselves and for others. By the Easter vision we can see that there is infinite power, it is for us to place ourselves unreservedly at His command and to pray with power the prayer "What would'st Thou have me to do?" What would'st Thou have me to do in myself so that I could be more in accordance with Thy mind and Will, and what would'st Thou have me to do for others to enable them to come nearer to Thee? "O God, Who hast displayed Thy power by rising from the dead, grant us the grace to live continually with Thee, that we may always glorify Thee as a Lamb sacrificed upon the Cross, and as issuing victorious from the tomb, Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost one God world without end."

Sermon XII

GOD OVER-RULING MAN'S SIN

"Now, therefore, be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life."

Genesis xlv. 5.

This text, my brethren, may, without irreverence, be called one of the *dangerous* texts of the Bible.

There are dangerous texts in the Bible, and such a text as this might easily lead a person to despair, tending to harden them. It seems stern, and it is dangerous to all except to those who know something of the mind of God, and will yield themselves up to the gentle influence of His grace. So, again, the text, "Except a man hate his wife and child, father and mother, brothers and sisters, he is not fit to follow Me"; that is a hard saying. Are we to hate them? It is hard, except to those who have studied our Lord's life. If a man has reverently meditated upon our Lord's life he will easily receive with harmony the first and fifth commandments. The love of God and our Lord's provision for His Mother on the Cross of Calvary. We all know how He loved His Mother, though He left her; and so we have to leave those we love and to go away from our neighbourhood and friends and start on a new way of life and forget those we love, as it were.

These texts are dangerous to all except those who study the Bible and know something of the mind of God. Yet to those accustomed to study the Bible the fact that there are these texts is not dangerous. The very medicine that is provided for us when we are sick to restore our health is often poison!

There are in the world of nature which God has appointed for us dangerous things, unless we use them wisely. If, then, we find in the Book of Revelation dangerous texts it is a corroboration that the Book of Revelation comes from the same place as the book of Nature, and this simply goes to prove the fact that the restitution and the institution of the world are wrought by the same hand. And so, brethren, what is it that this seems to say to us?

"Don't, then, be over-sorrowful, even for your sins!" Ah, this seems a rash word, and yet it is true: it is plainly put in the Bible lest one who had sinned should be over-sorrowful. These words seem to be addressed to us like those of Joseph to his brethren. He stretches forth His hands and seems to say "Come near to Me." He seems to stretch them forth and say, "Oh! you preachers of My Gospel who have been taking care of the people of Lincoln during this solemn time, come near to Me, be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither, for God did send me before you to preserve life."

You know the history connected with the text, how Joseph had been sold by his brethren on account of their bitter envy, jealousy, lying—they sold him to be

a slave. It was a grievous sin: this bitter envy and lying, bartering a brother—carried on between brother and brethren, between sons and father. It was a horrid sin, and yet Joseph says, "Now, therefore, be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither, for God did send me before you to preserve life." The truth, brethren, which this text proves is this: that God over-rules our bad deeds, and even brings good out of them. He not only checks the evil consequences which would arise from evil which we have done, but makes them work for good.

God made Joseph the means of preserving the lives of his brothers and his father. Such a thing to those who know the sin-stricken conscience would seem to be too good to be true. The way God over-rules our bad actions so as to bring good out of them is interwoven with the Creed.

To-day we keep the festival of Christ's Resurrection; what a supreme instance this is of the truth contained in the text! That is the way in which the Apostles delighted to look at the history of the Resurrection.

So we read, "The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. For of a truth against Thy Holy Child Jesus, Whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of the Jews, were gathered together." All support the false charges of the high priest; they are gathered together to do what? "To do whatsoever

Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done."

All the power which Herod and Pontius Pilate and all of the Jewish people can do was only what the Almighty power of God did command. It is a great text, how God over-rules the malice of the people for good.

The words our Lord spoke: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" did seem as if all was lost, and yet it was not so. By dying He destroyed Satan. All the envy and treachery that was brought to bear to bring about the death of Christ has been over-ruled. There are one or two passages which speak very remarkably of how Satan's power has been over-ruled so as to prove the truth.

There was some affliction which the devil was permitted to exercise on S. Paul Look at the follies of Satan pressing his thorn into the very flesh of the Apostle of the Gentiles, hoping to crush him, or to make him blaspheme God. And what a result! Foolish Satan. Foolish Satan pressing his thorn helps him to be carried to heaven, from which Satan fell. Oh! the wonderful power and wisdom of God; Satan tried to press his thorn and God just used it as a means of grace. Take another lesson from the New Testament. There was in olden time what was called "Excommunication"; in the First Epistle to the Corinthians we read of a man who had committed a grievous sin—fornication—such an act as would have shocked every one—the Apostle ordered him to be put

away from the Church; and yet look again in the Second Chapter of the Second Epistle, and you will find that he is restored to his former position "lest he should be swallowed up with over-much sorrow." So you see that this also was over-ruled so that the devil could not take him. No, the man is to be restored; Satan must have thought that he had got him, but God's over-ruling power produces contrition and repentance in the man, and within a year he is not only put back to his former position, but S. Paul charges the Christian Church at Corinth to receive him lest he should be overcome with too much sorrow: God will over-rule all the sufferings of the repentant. The Apostle seems to say to that man that had to be put away these words: "Now then be not grieved nor angry with yourself." He restored him, brought him back.

In the Epistle to S. Timothy there is another case somewhat similar; there are two who had sinned in the "denial of the Faith," and they were delivered to Satan "that they might learn not to blaspheme"; (ah! foolish Satan!) and God, in His discipline again lets them be restored, and so it turns out that Satan is allowed after all to teach men "not to blaspheme."

Brethren, I began by saying my text was a dangerous one; so it is with those who don't know Scripture. But it is in harmony with the whole teaching of Scripture that God over-rules the power of the Evil One, again and again.

What now shall be our practical conclusion from this to-night?

First of all, don't go away and say, "the preacher said we must do evil and good would come of it." Never, never! the law is that one *wilful* sin is the severance of the soul from God, and departure from God down to the bottomless pit, *unless* there is a repentance; any one sin wilful in thought—*indulged in*—must lead you on to sin against the Holy Ghost.

I must warn you, dear people, it is fatal to encourage people to sin; you must *not* do evil and trust that good will come of it. No, the truth of it is this: that God will over-rule our sinful actions so as to check the consequences of our sins; and not only that, but He will change them to blessings. Just as those poor women this morning going to the sepulchre. They thought, on their way, how they would manage to get the stone rolled away, and who would do it for them! But as they came near they found the stone already removed and rolled away! He was not there, He was risen as He said He would; that which they made a great trouble of was already done for them.

God will not only check the consequences of our sins, but even turn them into blessings.

So here Christ would seem to speak to us to-day just in this language of the text, "Grieve not nor be angry with yourselves that ye sold Me hither, for God did send Me before you to preserve life." Oh! then, dear ones for whom I died, My words to you were true: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Jesus would say: "I have many souls in Lincoln who have sinned, but they did it

ignorantly;" and to others: "I have known their sins and they knew they were sins, but I have since heard their prayers—the prayers of their hearts—I know their sighs and their longings, and now, dear ones, be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye sold Me hither; God has sent Me to over-rule, and to preserve life—life for you bought with My precious Blood."

Once more, if we would take Joseph's words to ourselves we must do this. Joseph's words were used so that the sins of his brethren might be forgiven. "Forgive, I pray thee, the trespass of thy brethren and their sin for they did evil against him." That is the way to find true repentance, it may be in the simplicity and privacy of one's heart, or it may be the better way of confessing your sins to God through His priest.

Ah, happy souls, who have said, "Forgive me my own grievous faults, for I have done evil."

Joseph's brethren did not hide their sins, they fell down before his face, and then came the words, "Now, therefore, be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye sold Me hither, for God did send Me before you to preserve life."

Here, then, dear people, you see what two great truths we get:

To-day we keep the Resurrection of Christ. The Son of God has died for us: He has purchased the Church, and as the Son of God has died, our sins are amply atoned for.

The comfort of that truth lies in this:

(i.) It was the Son of God Who died for me; I can rest upon this.

(ii.) That we may leave in God's hands the consequences of our sins; that we may leave and trust them in His hands.

It may be that although our Easter Day is come and we start released from former sins, that the same kind of temptation will come upon us, as came upon S. Paul in the Temple, when he was waiting to go on his mission. The devil reminded him of his past life, of his misdeeds, and what great sins he had committed. "How can I do this," he said, "after I have persecuted and put into prison others," and so he says, "when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed I was standing by." And so you may say to yourselves: I am free of my sins—but what is the good? Oh, your shocked memory, your evil imagination! How can you check the example then? What is the good of trying? and the answer comes: "He died on the Cross, as a means of checking the evil results which must necessarily follow our sins." And here I will say: "Now, therefore, be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye sold Me hither, for God did send Me before you to preserve life."

Just as He over-ruled the evil thoughts of Joseph's brethren, so He will over-rule the evil consequences of your sins.

Oh! then, let us to-night take these two truths as one fundamental truth.

(i.) Christ is risen, the Son of God who died for me; and
(ii.) The wonderful way in which the Son of God died for me.

I will not be intimidated, I will not be downhearted. Let us trust to God, then we shall follow the example of our Lord. His hands are mighty in operation. "I shall not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord."

May God not only give you this grace, but supply you with this light.

"God hath sent Me before you to preserve life."

DATE DUE

FROM THE L
JACK W. K

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King, Edward, 1829-1910
Easter sermons preached in Lincoln Cathedral